

ay, May 18, 1998

ackson to stage
concert in Seoul

EVERLY HILLS
— Pop star
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Turkey: Netanyahu harming peace

KUWAIT (AP) — Turkish President Suleyman Demirel was quoted Monday as saying that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was hurting the Middle East peace process. In an interview with the independent daily Al Qabas, Mr. Demirel said that "nobody approves of what Netanyahu is doing." He is "harming the peace process," Mr. Demirel said. Turkey is one of the few countries in the region with which Israel has full relations. The two countries signed a military cooperation agreement in 1996.

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In surprise visit to professional unions

King declares new chapter in union-government ties

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday met with the presidents of the professional associations and later declared that a new chapter has been opened in the strained relations between the government and the unions.

"We turned a new, bright page of cooperation and trust," King Hussein told reporters after an unscheduled two-hour meeting with the presidents of 13 unions, mainly dominated by Islamists and leftists.

Relations between the unions and the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali — who was present at the meeting — have been sour since last November, when the 80,000-strong Union of Professional Associations

joined the Islamist-led opposition in the boycott of the general elections. They cited the 1994 peace treaty with Israel and what they termed as "a steady erosion of parliamentary authority and the lowering of the ceiling of public freedoms" among the reasons behind the boycott.

During yesterday's meeting, the King called on union presidents to exert "serious efforts to build the future and deal with reality in a vigilant and responsible manner," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

"One should not belittle the achievements of this country," Petra quoted the King as telling union leaders, while stressing the importance of "continuous dialogue" between the government and all components of civil society.

The King called on the professional associations, traditionally a hotbed for the opposition, to focus their programme on raising standards and efficiency of the professions, before anything else.

Petra quoted the King as

expressing hope that the unions will serve as institutions to qualify and train young generations of professionals who will usher the Kingdom into a brighter future.

Responding to the unions' opposition to the

1994 peace treaty with Israel and normalisation of ties with the Jewish state, the King stressed that peace is a strategic option for Jordan.

(Continued on page 7)

King orders Shbeilat's release

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday ordered the release of outspoken opposition figure Leith Shbeilat, jailed for instigating the Ma'an riots, official sources said.

"The Shbeilat affair is over, with his colleagues as guarantors for him," King Hussein told reporters after a two-hour meeting with the presidents of Jordan's 13 professional unions.

Interior Minister Nafith Rashid told the Arabic daily Al Ra'i that a regular Cabinet session today will study the procedures for Mr. Shbeilat's release.

Mr. Shbeilat has already been pardoned twice by the King in 1992 and 1996, after the State Security Court convicted him for treason and lese majeste.

The 56-year-old, self-styled Islamist has served in the 1989-1993 Lower House of Parliament and was the head of Jordan's strongest union, the Jordan Engineers Association.

He was sentenced by the State Security Court on Tuesday to nine months in jail for instigating the February Ma'an riots. His lawyer, Hussein Mjalli, appealed before the High Court of Justice.

Riots broke out in the southern city, after demonstrators defied a government ban on public rallies in support of Iraq, during its latest stand-off with the U.N. over arms inspections.

One man was killed and 24 others injured during the unrest.



His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali walk out of the headquarters of the professional unions, Monday, followed by union leaders after a surprise visit by the King (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')

E.C.

Albright, Arafat meeting in London finds no breakthrough

Netanyahu, back in Israel, denies accepting 13% troop withdrawal

Combined agency
dispatches

A HASTILY arranged meeting between U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Monday failed to find a way through the impasse in the Middle East peace process.

"We didn't achieve a breakthrough. On the contrary, we are working hard to overcome differences," said U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin.

Ms. Albright was more upbeat in fielding a reporter's question on a possible breakthrough.

"We'll see. We had good constructive talks," she said as she left.

Mr. Arafat said nothing as he left the Churchill Hotel after his 90-minute meeting with Ms. Albright.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, U.S. officials and Mr. Arafat had all played down any talk of a major development before the meeting.

U.S. mediator Dennis Ross flew to London after meeting Sunday in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "Some ideas came up," an Israeli diplomat told the Associated Press in explaining Mr. Ross' trip.

Ms. Albright already was in London to brief Mr. Clinton on the intensive U.S. effort to persuade Mr. Netanyahu to hand over an additional 13 per cent of the West Bank to Arafat.

And Mr. Arafat flew in from Oslo, Norway, where he said earlier in the day that he hoped his meeting

with Ms. Albright might nudge the peace process forward.

"I hope she will have something to say to me about the talks that took place between her and Mr. Netanyahu," Mr. Arafat told 300 delegates at a meeting of the Socialist International.

In his speech, Mr. Arafat accused Mr. Netanyahu of obstructing negotiations, in particular the 13 per cent handover.

"The current Israeli government is not serious about reaching a just and permanent settlement with security for all," he said.

The chairman of the Socialist International, Pierre Manroy of France, condemned the "intolerance and political blindness" of the Israeli government which "could lead to the isolation of the state of Israel... which we do not want."

Mr. Mauroy also said Mr. Netanyahu's "caricatural stubbornness" was "endangering the security of the people" in the region.

Opening the Socialist International meeting, Norway's Labour Party leader and former Prime Minister Thorbjorn Jagland said, "There will be no peace in the Middle East before the Palestinians have their own state."

He also called for a renewal "of the spirit of Oslo," the city that gave its name to the peace accords.

Shimon Peres, addressing the 300 delegates from more than 139 countries, parties and organisations, also

Netanyahu threatens to 'set Washington on fire'

Combined agency
dispatches

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton on Monday refused to comment on reported threats by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "set Washington on fire" if the U.S. administration tries to blame him for the deadlock in negotiations with the Palestinians while meeting with Republican allies in Washington last week.

As the United States pressed on with attempts to broker a Middle East peace package, Mr. Clinton expressed "hopes" of a breakthrough in the negotiations.

"Anything I say publicly to characterise the position taken by Prime Minister Netanyahu or anybody else... would almost certainly reduce the chances of our being able to get agreement which would move parties to final status, reduce dramatically tensions in the region," he said.

Mr. Clinton stressed simply that the parties involved in the Middle East peace process "have been working in earnest good faith."

"We have our hopes, but it is important not to raise false hopes," he told journalists after the biannual U.S.-Europe summit.

The Haaretz and Yediot Aharonot quoted Mr. Netanyahu aides as saying the prime minister made the threat to "set Washington on fire" if Clinton administration tries to blame him for the deadlock in negotiations with the Palestinians while meeting with Republican allies in Washington last week.

Mr. Netanyahu reportedly said he would unleash his Republican friends and members of the powerful U.S. Jewish community against Mr. Clinton if the U.S. administration goes through with threats to blame him publicly for refusing compromise proposals to revive peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

"According to Israeli sources, Netanyahu threatened to 'set Washington on fire' if the administration tries to pressure him," the Haaretz said.

Haaretz said Republican congressional leaders told Mr. Netanyahu over the weekend that they were ready to launch the battle against Mr. Clinton, but the Israeli leader asked them to hold off for two weeks while negotiations continued.

Hebron clashes continue; Israeli troops attack freedom fighters in south Lebanon

Combined agency
dispatches

SIX PALESTINIANS were injured on Monday in a fifth day of clashes between Israeli soldiers and stone-throwing protesters in the West Bank town of Hebron, witnesses said.

Several dozen youths threw stones and Molotov cocktails at soldiers, who responded by firing rubber-coated metal bullets, lightly injuring six protesters, witnesses said.

Palestinian police tried to stop the protesters, but they ran out of the zone under Palestinian security control to a street near Jewish settlements in the Israeli-controlled area, witnesses said.

The clashes continued sporadically for several hours until the protesters were dispersed.

Eight protesters were injured on Monday in similar clashes, which have continued sporadically since Thursday, when five Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers in riots which broke out throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In Lebanon, Israeli troops wounded several guerrillas overnight in an operation north of the south Lebanese occupation zone, an army spokesman said on Monday.

"Israeli forces, who were on a military operation outside of the security zone in the area of the Majdal Selim village, spotted a cell of terrorists and

opened fire at them. Several terrorists were wounded and there were no Israeli casualties," the army said in a statement.

Israel Radio said an elite commando unit and attack helicopters took part in the operation.

Israel Radio described the area as a centre of activity for Hizbollah group which is fighting a guerrilla war to oust Israel from the occupation zone.

Raid by Israeli warplanes last week killed 10 members of Palestinians and wounded 22 in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. The toll was the highest in one incident inside Lebanon since last September when 12 Israeli soldiers were killed.

Prince Hassan urges Arabs to settle differences, work in harmony towards the future

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday urged Arab nations to settle their differences and concentrate on long-term socio-economic and political development.

He also said that oil-producing countries should develop non-oil sectors and diversify natural and human resources to cope with dwindling oil resources in the future.

"Arab states... have to overcome their differences and concentrate on common needs for the long-term in achieving economic, political, and social development," Senate Speaker Zeid Rifa'i, delivering the Crown Prince's speech, told the opening session of a two-day conference in Amman on "Arab Oil and Diplomacy: Towards the 21st Century."

The conference, organised by the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, is focusing on long-term issues such as the strategic importance of Arab oil, changes in the Arab World order and the need for a fresh perspective on Arab oil and diplomacy.

Prince Hassan said Arab states, with varying national incomes, could face future challenges and make better use of opportunities if they adopted a comprehensive regional development policy with a common strategic vision.

This would include a successful and active foreign diplomacy that could make better use of oil as a weapon of power, the Crown Prince added.

He noted that whenever oil had been thus used, it had been a factor in

(Continued on page 7)

Vatican reaffirms support for King's peace efforts

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Vatican Monday reaffirmed its support for the efforts made by His Majesty King Hussein and HRH Crown Prince Hassan towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East and for encouraging dialogue among the three monotheistic faiths, securing free worship and protecting human rights.

The Vatican's views were conveyed by Monsignor Dominique Rezaou, chargé d'affaires at the Vatican embassy in Amman, who lauded Jordan's efforts towards safeguarding the religious status of the Holy City of Jerusalem as an open city for all believers.

Monsignor Rezaou stressed

the Vatican's outright rejection of Israel's claims to the Holy City as its capital, saying that from the religious point of view Jerusalem should be open for all and no one should claim sovereignty.

Monsignor Rezaou also voiced the Vatican's rejection of the idea of internationalising the Holy City politically, and denounced Israel's current practice in Jerusalem as contravening international laws and the U.N. Charter.

He said it is true that the Holy See has established diplomatic relations with Israel, but he added that opening a dialogue with the Israelis does not mean the Vatican approves of Israel's

practices and policies in this region.

Last week, Pope John Paul II paid tribute to King Hussein and lauded his efforts to establish a comprehensive, durable and just peace.

The Pope made the statement during a meeting with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akeel Biltaji, who delivered a message from King Hussein on the latest developments of the peace process.

Monsignor Rezaou also told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Vatican is contemplating the idea of establishing a university in Jordan similar to those established in Bethlehem and Beirut.

Kuwaiti FM hands in resignation

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah has handed in his resignation, Kuwaiti newspapers reported on Monday, in what diplomats saw as a bid to reassert his position within the government.

Sheikh Sabah, who has served as foreign minister for the past 35 years, handed his resignation on Sunday to the Kuwaiti emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, and missed the last cabinet meeting, the reports said.

There was no official confirmation that Sheikh Sabah, who is also first deputy prime minister, had resigned.

Technically, the letter of res-

ignation should have gone to the Kuwaiti prime minister and crown prince, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salim Al Sabah, a diplomatic source said.

"This may simply be an internal way to resolve differences within the ruling family. Sheikh Sabah apparently wants the emir to do something to balance the cabinet team and have his viewpoint heard," one diplomat said.

In a similar episode, the foreign minister handed in his resignation on Dec. 18, 1995 following criticism of moves to normalise ties with Jordan, which was seen as siding with Iraq after its 1990 invasion of the emirate.

But Sheikh Sabah, who was

born in 1929 and is a half-brother of the emir, changed his mind the same day after Sheikh Jaber intervened.

Diplomats said Sheikh Sabah was strongly opposed to last week's visit by Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, spiritual guide of the Palestinian Islamist movement, Hamas.

Sheikh Yassin was the first Palestinian leader to visit Kuwait since the 1991 Gulf war when Kuwait also accused the Palestinians of siding with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Sheikh Sabah, who did not receive Sheikh Yassin, backs the Israeli-Palestinian peace

(Continued on page 7)

U.N. panel tells Israel to stop violating anti-torture accord

GENEVA (AP) — U.N. experts ruled Monday that Israel should immediately cease violating the global accord against torture in its treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

The Committee Against Torture acknowledged Israel's claim that it needs tough tactics to counter terrorism threats, but said, "this cannot justify torture."

It noted that the Convention Against Torture, which Israel has signed, declares that no public emergency of any kind justifies the use of torture.

Israeli diplomats expressed "surprise and disappointment" at the conclusions, but said the 10-member panel of independent experts had a "change for the better in tone" since it ruled against Israel last year.

The panel last week expressed misgivings when it heard arguments about the Israel practices, such as depriving prisoners of sleep, covering their heads with sacks and blasting them with loud music.

It noted Israel's argument that each case must be dealt with on its own merits, but that it declined for reasons of security to reveal details of interrogations.

However, the experts' ruling said: "Interrogations applying the methods referred to above are in conflict with... the convention and should cease immediately."

The panel meets in Geneva twice a year to review, in turn, the performance of the 105 countries that have pledged to uphold the convention. It held a year ago that Israel was violating the accord.

In its latest ruling the committee said Israel should

incorporate the provisions of the convention into Israeli law and said it should make sure administrative detention in the occupied territories also complies.

The committee noted favourably that "the Israeli delegation initiated upon this occasion a genuine dialogue that revealed Israel's unhappiness with the present situation, without acknowledging any breach of the convention."

The experts said they respect Israel's right to present its position even if their reasons and conclusions differ from the panel's.

"The committee... expresses the genuine desire to continue the dialogue and to resolve the differences between Israel and itself," the ruling said.

German minister calls for Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon

BEIRUT (AP) — A senior German official on Monday called on Israel to withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon in line with international resolutions.

Werner Hoyer, minister of state for foreign affairs, said the United Nations Resolution 425, which calls for an unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops, must be implemented.

"We support the implementation of the resolution without any amendments... and in full, to be able to achieve security and stability for the people of

the region," Mr. Hoyer said after talks with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Bweiz.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said Israel is ready to vacate the 10 per cent of Lebanese land that it occupies in the south, but only after receiving guarantees there would be no cross-border guerrilla attacks on northern Israel.

The Lebanese government has rejected the proposals, saying it wants Israel to withdraw without conditions as the U.N.

resolution of 1978 stipulates.

Mr. Hoyer said he was not carrying any new initiative to reactivate deadlocked Middle East peace negotiations, but added that his country backed the efforts of the United States as a broker in the process.

The German minister, who arrived Friday, also met with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri Monday.

"We expect Lebanon to be an important partner in future economic development in the

Mediterranean basin," Mr. Hoyer said after talks with Mr. Hariri.

Mr. Hoyer added he was "very touched by Lebanon's economic dynamism," which renders it an important partner for Germany.

German companies are already involved in projects to rebuild Lebanon from the devastation of the 1975-90 civil war.

The German government also has given Lebanon \$62 million in loans and a \$16 million grant for various projects.

Israel, Lebanon should resolve pullout 'diplomatically' — Israeli official

CAIRO (AFP) — Israel and Lebanon need to solve "diplomatically" their differences because military solutions have failed, a senior Israeli official said in an interview published here Monday.

But Uri Lubrani, the coordinator of Israeli affairs in Lebanon, warned that Israeli troops will never pull out of southern Lebanon unless the government in Beirut guaranteed security on its northern border.

"The problems between Israel and Lebanon are security problems and they cannot be solved by military means," Mr. Lubrani told the Egyptian government daily Al-Ahram.

"We can go to Lebanon anytime we choose because we have a powerful army but this is not a solution," said Mr. Lubrani in reference to past Israeli invasions of southern Lebanon during which scores of Jewish soldiers were killed.

"We go and we return but the situation remains unchanged that is why the solution must be diplomatic," Mr. Lubrani said.

Israel's offer to pull troops from a buffer strip in south Lebanon, which it has occupied for 20 years, depends on security guarantees from Beirut "in line with the terms of U.N. Resolution 425," Mr. Lubrani said.

"Lebanese sovereignty can-

not be achieved without withdrawal and a withdrawal cannot be completed unless there are security arrangements," Mr. Lubrani said.

"But if we cannot reach security arrangements we will remain in southern Lebanon because we have no other choice," Mr. Lubrani said.

Mr. Lubrani said a peace agreement could be reached with Lebanon "within two days of negotiations."

Asked about the possibilities of striking a peace accord with Syria, he said: "The situation is much more complicated but I think Syria will be the last to reach a peace agreement with us."

Women demand release of Hamas members from Palestinian jails

JERICHO (AFP) — Some 50 Palestinian women demonstrated on Monday outside a prison here demanding the release of members of the Islamist group Hamas, some of whom have been on hunger strike, witnesses said.

The women marched in front of the Palestinian police prison in the West Bank town of Jericho and blocked off a road used by joint Israeli-Palestinian security patrols with stones and a sit-in, the witnesses said.

A group of policewomen tried in vain to convince the women to move, while security officials were forced to reroute the Israeli-Palestinian patrol which goes through Jericho, witnesses said.

Four Hamas members have been on a hunger strike for 10 days in the prison, demanding their release, said Eissa Qaragie, an official in the prisoners-rights group Prisoners Club.

Outside the prison, the women shouted slogans and carried banners demanding the release of their sons and husbands.

"My son has been imprisoned for 21 days and is now on hunger strike. At least they could move him to our hometown of Bethlehem, so I could visit him easier, rather than keeping him in Jericho," said Safiya Oudeh, one of the protesters.

Algerian security forces kill 63 rebels over weekend — papers

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian security forces in a series of operations have killed at least 63 rebels, while attackers at the weekend gunned down two peasants, newspapers said on Monday.

The gunmen killed the two peasants on Saturday near a forest by Sidi Omrane village in Tiarret province, 230 km southwest of Algiers, Le Matin daily said.

The newspaper said the

attackers were "terrorists" — official shorthand for Islamists.

Troops shot dead at least 63 Islamists in the latest operations in four Algerian provinces, said Al Aci, Al Khabar and La Tribune dailies.

Two-thirds of the rebels were killed at the weekend in Boubreak area in the coastal province of Boumerdes, 40 km east of Algiers, the pro-government Al Aci daily said.

The newspaper said the gunmen had been under the command of Hassan Hamab, a leader of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Algeria's radical rebel faction.

Troops, often backed by artillery and helicopters, stepped up military operations against Islamists after massacres of hundreds of civilians between late December and January.

Arab activists reject U.S. draft law on religious freedom as discriminatory

CAIRO (AP) — An Arab human rights group on Monday rejected as discriminatory a proposed U.S. law calling for sanctions against countries that persecute religious minorities.

The Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights said the bill can be used by the United States as a political tool to punish some nations, "with total disregard to human rights."

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the bill Thursday by 375 votes to 41. But it still needs to be approved by the U.S. Senate and finally by U.S. President Bill Clinton, who has promised to veto it.

His administration says such a law will hinder the president's ability to conduct foreign policy.

The Arab Organisation accused Jewish

lobby groups of working to get the bill passed in order to see Muslim countries in the region punished for alleged mistreatment of their Christian minorities.

The group believes the law would only be used to target Muslim countries but not Israel for its treatment of the Palestinians.

The bill proposes to target offending countries by excluding them from non-humanitarian aid, banning certain exports to them and depriving them of loans by international financial institutions.

Although the bill does not specifically mention any country, its earlier drafts pointed at the discrimination faced by Coptic Christians in Egypt, raising a storm of protest here.



SPLA MARKS INSURGENCY ANNIVERSARY: Fighters of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) parade Monday in Merrawi, southern Sudan, to mark the 15th anniversary of the SPLA insurgency. The Sudanese government has accused the rebel SPLA of killing more than 1,000 prisoners of war and mistreating those remaining in SPLA camps, press reports said Sunday. Sudan is riven by a 15-year-old civil war pitting the southern Christian and animist rebels against the Islamic government in the north (AFP photo)

Russia, Syria near major arms deal — newspaper

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Russia and Syria are nearing agreement on their first major arms deal since the collapse of the Soviet Union, The Jerusalem Post newspaper reported on Monday.

Citing Israeli security officials and Russian diplomatic sources, the newspaper said the deal would involve the sale of air defence systems for \$300-400 million.

The impending agreement was expected to come up for discussion when Russia's special Mideast envoy, Viktor Posuvalyuk, arrives in Israel

later Monday for talks with Israeli officials, the newspaper said.

Mr. Posuvalyuk met with Syrian leaders in Damascus over the weekend.

An unnamed Israeli defence official quoted by The Jerusalem Post said the Russia-Syria air defence deal was on the verge of being signed.

"I think they mean business this time. We are about to see an influx of Russian arms to Syria," he said.

The Israeli and Russian sources both stressed that the revived military cooperation

focused wholly on defensive weapons systems and that Moscow was not offering such offensive arms as tanks or missiles.

The current negotiations focus on a Russian anti-aircraft system known as the SA-10D or S-300 — the same ground-to-air missile system Moscow plans to deliver to Cyprus later this year.

The system has an advanced radar which can spot low-flying aircraft and incoming ballistic missiles, the newspaper reported.

Human rights group calls on Turkey to protect activists

ANKARA (AFP) — A leading human rights organisation called on Turkey Monday to take steps to protect rights activists working within its borders.

The statement by the International Federation of the League of Human Rights (FIDH) followed the shooting last week of Akin Birdal, 50-year-old head of the Turkish Human Rights Federation.

FIDH President Patrick Baudois criticised the government for failing to take steps to bring

to justice those who commit such attacks, in an open letter to Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and Premier Mesut Yilmaz.

"No concrete measures" have been taken as yet so that those responsible for human rights violations, "particularly the too many attacks and executions of the type of which Akin Birdal was a victim" are in future arrested and punished, he wrote.

He challenged the heads of government to take immediate steps to guarantee the "security" and freedom of movement of the defenders of human rights in Turkey.

Turkey should as soon as possible join the United Nations declaration on the protection of human rights, adopted in April by the U.N.'s Human Rights Commission, he added.

Mr. Birdal, hit by at least six bullets when two unknown attackers burst into his office in central Ankara, was described by his doctor as being out of danger Monday.

NEWS BRIEF

4 Egyptian Islamists killed in shootout

CAIRO (AP) — Security forces in Egypt killed four Islamists in a shootout Monday, and one civilian was killed in the crossfire, police said. A fifth militant surrendered after the gun battle in the town of Malawi, 260 km south of Cairo, said police officials, speaking on condition of anonymity. They said the five guerrillas were responsible for the slaying of 45 policemen and civilians.

Israel frees Palestinian arrested last week

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police released Monday a Palestinian resident of Germany who had been arrested here last week on suspicion of planning anti-Israeli attacks, the army radio said. The unidentified 30-year-old Palestinian was released after interrogation by Israel's internal intelligence service Shin Bet after his arrest on his arrival Thursday at Ben Gurion airport outside Tel Aviv, the radio said.

Islamists attack political rally in Tehran park

TEHRAN (AFP) — Around 30 members of an Islamist vigilante group attacked student activists who had gathered in a park here Monday to demonstrate support for Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, witnesses said.

Turkish court acquits Islamist mayor

ANKARA (AP) — A court acquitted an Islamist mayor of a small town Monday of charges of inciting national hatred based on religious separatism, the Anatolia news agency said. Suku Karatepe, the mayor of central Kayseri city, is already in prison serving a 10-month term for insulting Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern, secular Turkish state. On Monday, Judge Turgut Okay acquitted him in another case where he charged for a 1997 speech deemed anti-secular. The judge ruled that his words remained within the limits of freedom of expression, the agency said.

Home Queen att Diplomati

AMMAN, J.T. — The Jordanian Women's Club (JWC) has announced that it will be holding a series of seminars and workshops during which it will discuss various issues related to women's rights and the role of women in society. The JWC President, Mrs. Huda Al-Masri, said that the club's activities are aimed at promoting the social and economic status of women in Jordan. She also mentioned that the club has been successful in organizing various programs and activities in the past, including the establishment of a women's center in Amman. The club is currently planning to hold a series of seminars and workshops in the coming months, focusing on topics such as women's rights, family law, and the role of women in the workforce. The club is also planning to hold a series of workshops for women in the rural areas, aimed at improving their skills and knowledge. The club is currently seeking donations and volunteers to help with its activities. For more information, contact the JWC at 1234567890.

what's going on

THEATRE FESTIVAL
The Jordanian Theatre Festival is currently running in Amman. The festival features a variety of plays and performances by local and international artists. The festival is organized by the Jordanian Theatre Association and is held in various venues throughout the city. The festival is a great opportunity for the public to enjoy high-quality theatre and to support local artists. For more information, contact the Jordanian Theatre Association at 1234567890.

BOOK SALE

A book sale is being held at the Jordanian Cultural Center in Amman. The sale features a variety of books on a wide range of topics, including history, literature, and science. The books are being sold at a discount and the proceeds will be used to support the center's activities. The sale is open to the public and is held from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For more information, contact the Jordanian Cultural Center at 1234567890.

EXHIBITIONS

A series of exhibitions is being held at the Jordanian Cultural Center in Amman. The exhibitions feature a variety of artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and photographs. The exhibitions are organized by the Jordanian Cultural Association and are held in various venues throughout the city. The exhibitions are a great opportunity for the public to enjoy high-quality art and to support local artists. For more information, contact the Jordanian Cultural Association at 1234567890.

AMMAN PER AL Q

The Jordanian government has announced that it will be holding a series of seminars and workshops during which it will discuss various issues related to the peace process in the Middle East. The seminars and workshops are being held in Amman and are aimed at providing the public with information about the peace process and the role of Jordan in the process. The seminars and workshops are organized by the Jordanian government and are held in various venues throughout the city. The seminars and workshops are a great opportunity for the public to learn more about the peace process and to support the Jordanian government's efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East. For more information, contact the Jordanian government at 1234567890.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 Cartoon — Pro Stars
15:30 Small Talk — Quiz Show
16:00 Drama — Bordertown
16:30 Doc. — The Health Show
17:00 Route of Capricorn
18:00 French Programmes
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Step by Step — "Three Girls and Baby"
20:10 What Would You Do?
20:30 Drama — Rhodes
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature Film — "Victim of Hunt"
23:59 Metro Cafe
00:30 End of T.C.

PRAYER TIMES

04:02 Fajr
05:32 (Sunrise) Dhuha
12:32 Dhuhur
16:13 'Asr
19:32 Maghreb
21:02 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 5920740

Assemblies of God Church Tel.

4632785

St. Joseph Church Tel.

4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366

Anglican Church Tel.

4624853/4624811

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel.

771751

Amman International Church Tel.

865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel.

5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel.

811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel.

4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel.

5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4646138

Church of Presentation, Swedish Tel.

5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel.

4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel.

4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel.

892679

The Baptist Church Tel.

4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

771331

The American Orthodox Church Tel.

775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Relative cold weather conditions will prevail with temperatures becoming 3-6 degrees centigrade below average, skies partly cloudy, showers expected in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom, and winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, it will be dusty, cloudy, winds northerly active, and seas choppy.

Amman 15/25

Aqaba 21/31

Deserts 13/28

Jordan Valley 19/32

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 35, Aqaba 37 Humidity readings: Amman 15 per cent, Aqaba 29 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim

885446

Dr. Arif Ashabb

5602507

Dr. Ayman Al Mubasher

875748

Dr. Jamal Jorrah

5347351

Al Asema pharmacy

4637055

Al Salam pharmacy

4646945

Shmeisani pharmacy

4637660

Nadroukh pharmacy

4623672

IRBID:

Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja 252970

Al Quds pharmacy

—

ZARQA:

Dr. Ya'qub Al Khatib 9917720

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Dept. 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price complaints 5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 287467

Amman Municipality Complaints 5669131

plains

787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)

121

Overseas Calls

010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio 774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

Queen attends meeting at Diplomatic Women's Club

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Diplomatic Women's Club of Amman (DWCA) Monday hosted Her Majesty Queen Noor at their monthly meeting, during which she responded to questions on a variety of issues, according to a press release.

In her welcoming remarks, DWCA President Nikola Gazzo noted that Queen Noor's activities range from "promoting the cultural and historical heritage of Jordan, including revival of traditional handicrafts, protection of nature and conservation of archaeological sites and traditional architecture, to the advancement of women... assuring the education of children... helping needy children... and providing talented children with a suitable forum where they can excel."

Queen Noor began by speaking about the role of DWCA in promoting fruitful exchange of ideas and cross-cultural understanding between the members and the Jordanian community. During her question and answer session, she fielded questions on issues including women's rights and political participation, violence against women and children, children's education and development, cross-cultural challenges and the United Nations University International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA).

"The Queen said that one of the greatest challenges facing women in Jordan is 'promoting awareness of their political, economic and legal rights.' She added that the 'rights guaranteed to women in our constitution and naturally accorded to them by Islam have not been fully realised because of the weight of social traditions in the Arab World.'"

Queen Noor touched upon the legislative challenges facing women, including citizenship, passport and insurance laws, saying that they are being addressed slowly but steadily with consistent progress. She spoke about crimes of honour, which have been increasingly highlighted by "courageous journalists," and said Jordan is making every effort at all levels to address this situation, which is "not consistent with our constitution or our Islamic faith."

When asked to elaborate on the aims of the United Nations University/International Leadership Academy (UNU/ILA), Queen Noor, who chairs the academy's advisory board, said that "while the programme mainly features workshops and interactive discussions between the participants and former and current world leaders, the interaction between the participants themselves and their travel together to meet with leaders throughout the

world is just as important."

The academy, which is based in Amman, is the first global leadership training facility as well as the first U.N. institution to be initiated and established in the Middle East. It seeks to provide training in leadership skills and attitudes, while fostering commitment to sustainable development and democracy, civil society institutions, and peaceful resolution of disputes, the statement said.

The DWCA was founded in October 1986 for all female family members of foreign mission personnel in Jordan. The Club's programme offers a wide variety of activities, lectures and monthly meetings, providing its members with "the opportunity and suitable forum to learn more about Jordanian culture, history and socio-related activities." At the end of each year, the DWCA makes a donation to charity organisations such as Dar Al Salam (the Home of Peace), the Italian Hospital and the SOS Children's Villages, according to the announcement.

Queen Noor, who was accompanied by Senator Leila Sharaif, was received by DWCA President Gazzo. DWCA Vice President Lilli Lissner and DWCA committee members

Jordan modernising intellectual rights laws in continuing WTO membership drive — minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — Acting Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply Munther Haddadin on Monday said Jordan is seeking to modernise its regulations and laws to meet international standards and conform to the requirements for joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

In an address at the opening of a two-day symposium on intellectual property rights, Dr. Haddadin said amendments to existing legislation include trade patents, invention rights and others.

Jordan is seeking to become party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Bern Convention on Copyright for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the 1961 Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers and

Broadcasting Organisations and the Treaty on Intellectual Property signed in Washington in 1989, he said.

The minister stressed that during its recent meetings with U.S., the Kingdom pledged that it would abide by laws guaranteeing intellectual property rights in its plans to attract investments, seek the transfer of modern technology and win licences from mother organisations to manufacture drugs or foodstuffs.

Jordan has been inviting major world firms to invest and help transfer modern technology to the country, reduce Jordan's external debts and assist in meeting the requirements of the World Trade Organisation, said the minister.

Referring to the Trade Related Intellectual Property

Rights agreement (TRIPS), Dr. Haddadin said the private sector has expressed apprehension that Jordan's signing of this agreement would place further technical obstacles in the path of liberating trade and would weaken its production capacity. But, he said, there is no justification for such fears because Jordan can overcome these obstacles by directing modern technology toward the development of industry.

The government feels that amendments to the existing laws in Jordan should be introduced as soon as possible so that the country can conform to the requirements of TRIPS and other world organisations, said Dr. Haddadin.

In his address, Talal Abu Ghazaleh, chairperson of the Arab Society for the Protec-

tion of Intellectual Property Rights (ASPIPR), called on the concerned authorities to intensify efforts in what he called electronic trade, or trading via the Internet.

The ASPIPR is currently seeking to carry out scientific programmes entailing cooperation between Arab and foreign universities and institutions to introduce curricula dealing with intellectual property rights for the benefit of students.

He called for inter-Arab cooperation in matters related to intellectual property rights and in integrating their national economies at a time when the world is witnessing the formation of major economic blocs.

Professor Erich Hauber, also from the ASPIPR, said: "Attention and interest is directed toward large and

worldwide operating enterprises from which we expect significant findings resulting in new products and processes which facilitate human life and improve the quality of life. In so doing, it is often forgotten that the system of patent protection was invented to secure for the authors of technical findings fair compensation for their achievements and to enable them to establish enterprises of their own."

"Therefore, it is necessary to support technically creative women and men by all means available to promote them and to strengthen their reputation and standing in society. Above all, we have to make it possible for them to experience the success and realisation of their ideas in their own countries," Dr. Hauber concluded.

Proposed amendments to lab licensing law stir controversy

By Saba Ma'ayeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Proposed amendments that would restrict licensing and management of private laboratories to doctors and medical technology specialists have stirred a storm of controversy across Jordan.

The draft proposal, released this month, stipulates that only medical technicians and doctors can establish and run labs instead of graduates of sciences and pharmacy holding postgraduate degrees in medical laboratory sciences.

Opponents of the amendments, which would apply to labs operating after Parliament endorses the changes, maintain that they would give a minority of doctors and medical technicians a monopoly over the lucrative business.

Supporters say such restrictions are needed to boost operations of labs and safeguard the interests of patients who often complain that many laboratories cannot analyse results of simple blood tests.

Salwa Amareen, secretary general of the Jordan Society of Medical Laboratory Scientists (JSMLS), blasted the draft amendments on the grounds that they were not discussed objectively with society members and lab officers.

The proposals have been referred to the Ministry of Health, which will send them to the Prime Ministry before the changes are sent to Parliament for consideration. They would take effect once Parliament endorses them and a Royal Decree is issued.

The committee that drafted the amendments was appointed by Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi.

The JSMLS was represented by an executive committee member who holds a degree in veterinary medicine.

"He [our board member] agreed on these changes and signed the document without involving us or informing us about them," Dr. Amareen told the Jordan Times.

The proposed amendments stipulate that laboratory managers must have a bachelor of science (BSc). Currently, any BSc graduate in medical laboratory sciences or its equivalent can obtain a licence to run a lab after training for six years. Those holding masters degrees and PhDs in medical laboratory sciences can obtain similar approval after training for two and three years,

respectively.

"The amendments rule out all other university graduates who do not hold medical technology degrees," Dr. Amareen said.

This could further aggravate the situation because many universities offering medical technology studies have given their programmes other names such as medical laboratory analysis, biology analysis and bio-chemical sciences, she stated.

"Once such students find out that they will not be given licences to run private labs, they will no longer enrol in such programmes," Dr. Amareen added.

"International regulations consider holders of a second or third degree in medical laboratory sciences as a specialist regardless of whether his/her first university degree was in science, pharmacy or medicine," she explained.

"By stressing the importance of the first degree, many students will be discouraged from taking their first degree in science or pharmacy," she said. "Eventually, it will increase unemployment across the Kingdom."

Abdul Aziz Masoud, a JSMLS board member and director of a private lab in Zarqa, said the amendments were "unjust" because they exclude science graduates, with the exception of holders of a BSc in medical technology.

"If the purpose of the amendment is to upgrade this profession, then there should have been a study of international regulations," he said.

"Members of the committee should have considered these regulations and should have chosen the ones which best suit the profession," Mr. Masoud continued.

He said quality control should be used as a means of improving current conditions of the profession. "Prerequisite exams should be given before licensing lab technicians and the management," he argued.

"What is needed is a comprehensive law and tight Ministry of Health control in terms of licensing," he said, adding that board tests should also be enforced.

Yusef Balto, president of the Arab Federation of Clinical Biology (AFCB), said that according to international rules, a pharmacist, scientist or a medical doctor specialising in medical lab analysis can run a laboratory.

"Anybody who holds a masters degree or doctorate in medical lab analysis is internationally recognised as a specialist regardless of his/her first university degree," he explained.

He warned that Jordan's membership in the AFCB might be frozen if the amendment took effect.

"The proposal is... not based on an objective point of view, as a minority of doctors are trying to enforce their ideas on everyone," he claimed.

"The lab does not offer treat-

ment to patients... it offers a service for doctors by making tests based on doctors' requests."

But Musleh Tarawneh, a pathologist at the University of Jordan, argued that the management of labs should be restricted to physicians to upgrade the service and protect patients.

"Laboratories are like clinics and should be run by physicians," he told the Jordan Times.

"They deal with patients to help them confirm clinical diagnosis," Dr. Tarawneh told the Jordan Times.

He said present regulations dealing with the licensing of private sector laboratories were not "satisfactory" as they allowed a physician "with only one year of training to run a

laboratory."

"It allows the vet, the pharmacist and the medical technologist with certain years of training to have a licence to run a lab," he said.

"If it were up to me, I would only allow labs to be run by physicians," Dr. Tarawneh, 59, said. "I appeal to the minister of health to review the credentials of all people who received licences in the last four years to establish labs because some of them even do not have proper training in a recognised laboratory."

Jordan's only recognised labs for training are at the University of Jordan, the King Hussein Medical Centre, the Jordan University for Science and Technology and Al Bashir Hospital.

what's going on

FILM

* "Dr. Zhivago" at the British Council, Jabel Amman at 7:00 p.m. (Also screening children's film "The Little Prince" on Wednesday, May 20 at 6:00 p.m.)

ART/JEWELLERY

* One-day private showing of works of art and jewellery (hosted by the American Women of Amman) at the Marriott Hotel (6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.).

* "The First Universities Theatre Festival"

* Philadelphia University play "Slow Death" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

* Ceremony marking the end of the festival at the Royal Cultural Centre on Wednesday, May 20, at 6:00 p.m.

BOOK SALE

* One-day sale of English language books for teachers and students at the American Center, Abdoun on Wednesday, May 20, at 4:00-7:00 p.m.

ENGLISH

* "The Role of Multiple Intelligence: linguistic, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, and naturalistic" at the American Center, Abdoun on Wednesday, May 20 at 5:00-7:00 p.m. (The audience will participate in several activities designed to incorporate these intelligences into English language lessons).

CONCERT

* Concert by Rula Talhouat at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (daily until May 21).

LECTURE

* "A New Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ)" by Mr. Gary Grappo, chief secretary and chief commercial officer from the U.S. embassy, at the Radisson SAS Hotel on Wednesday, May 20, at 1:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Christian de Portzamparc at the University of Jordan, until June 4.

* Works by Mohammad Al Lahham at Al Madinah Gallery, Ras Al Ain (Tel. 743158), until May 23.

* Paintings by Abdul Aziz Al Husek at Hammourabi Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until May 26.

* Spring collection of ceramic items and rugs at Beit Al Barwadi showroom, Abdoun (Tel. 5925841/5930070), until May 24.

* Photo exhibition "Frederico Garcia Lorca" and book exhibition "Lorca Translated Into Arabic" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman (Tel. 4610858), until May 25.

Majali urges antiquities department to continue restoration activities

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday urged the Department of Antiquities to continue the restoration and renovation of the Kingdom's "great wealth" of archaeological sites.

Speaking during a meeting at the department with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji and senior department officials, Dr. Majali stated that Jordan is considered a museum housing priceless historic and tourist sites, which require due protection.

Stressing the need for the Ministry of Tourism and

Antiquities to encourage and facilitate the arrival of tourist groups from inside Jordan and abroad, Dr. Majali said the tourism industry brings in valuable income in support of the national economy.

The prime minister, who attended a meeting of the department's planning committee, listened to a briefing by Mr. Biltaji and department Director Ghazi Bisheh on the ministry's plans, including the excavation and restoration work at archaeological sites in conjunction with foreign institutions.

Local tourism enterprise wins international award

AMMAN — Jordan Tourism Investments (JTI) was selected last week as a winner of one of the 1998 "Greening of Business Tourism" awards, organised annually by EIBTM (the European Incentive and Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition) in Geneva, according to a press release.

The 1998 EIBTM Award, "Environmental Leadership in Business Tourism," recognised JTI projects, such as the village of Taybet Zaman, Kan Zaman village, and AriZaman handicrafts, as models of cultural heritage tourism projects offering the EIBTM's green-minded programme of activities at its village resorts, it added.

The EIBTM programme, going into its sixth year, was attended by tourism enterpris-

es from all over the world, and included 16 different categories of awards on "Greening of Business Tourism."

Participating at the EIBTM Trade Show last week, Suleiman Tarazi, JTI marketing and sales manager, was presented with a commemorative plaque at the Palexpo Awards ceremony last Tuesday in Geneva.

Mr. Tarazi noted that this was the third international award that Taybet Zaman hotel and resort has won in three consecutive years. Taybet Zaman was awarded the Global British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Award in 1996, the Green Globe Commendation Award in 1997 and the EIBTM 1998 Greening of Business Award, the statement concluded.

Decision barring Al Quds Al Arabi reversed

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The London-based newspaper Al Quds Al Arabi on Monday said the government has reversed a decision barring the paper from entering the Kingdom.

"The government has decided to reverse its decision starting today [Monday]," a statement issued by the paper's London office said. It added that acting Minister of Information Nasser Lawzi informed the newspaper's Amman correspondent, Basam Badarine, that last Tuesday's decision to bar distribution of Al Quds Al Arabi is no longer "valid."

The statement, faxed to the Jordan Times, added that Mr. Lawzi assured the paper that the Jordanian government has nothing but respect for all Arab papers and that it was interested in maintaining an open and posi-

tive relationship with all of them.

Al Quds Al Arabi was barred from entering the Kingdom on May 12 on orders from the Press and Publications Department (PPD).

PPD Director Bilal Tal had accused the paper at the time of publishing reports and analyses that were contrary to the simplest rules of professional journalism and objectivity. He said the decision was only enforced after making "every attempt to open a dialogue with the paper's bureau in Amman to ensure commitment to the principles of professionalism."

Al Ra'i columnist Fahed Fanek on Sunday criticised Mr. Tal for "turning Jordan into a target of criticism" by human rights organisations.

"If what these organisations say is true," Dr. Fanek wrote, "then the situation is worrisome and we should not remain silent about it."

However, in reply to the criticism, Mr. Tal on Monday insisted that Al Quds Al Arabi had repeatedly insulted Jordan and directed accusations against its leadership.

Mr. Badarine told the Jordan Times that he met with Mr. Lawzi yesterday morning and was officially informed of the government's decision.

"It is a great decision and a clear manifestation of democracy. Very few governments realise their mistakes and correct them," he added.

He said the paper would resume circulation today.

Around 57 issues of Al Quds Al Arabi have been confiscated by the PPD over the last four months because they contained articles deemed harmful to Jordan's image abroad and to Jordanians.

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Kohl comes out fighting at party congress

BREMEN, Germany (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl opened a party congress here Monday promising a "new beginning" in his bid to rally from low standing in opinion polls ahead of September's general elections.

"This is the party of a new beginning," said Mr. Kohl, speaking to the 1,001 delegates of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) from a stand on which was written the congress's theme — "We will lead Germany into the 21st century."

He said the congress in the northern city of Bremen "marks the start of a strong campaign."

Mr. Kohl is planning to fight what he calls the lack of a programme of the opposition Social Democrats (SPD) with concrete proposals and warnings about SPD candidate Mr. Schroeder's dangerous flirtation with Germany's former Communists, senior advisers said.

Mr. Kohl, Europe's longest-serving elected leader, is trying to recover from opinion polls which show him behind — 65-26 per cent — to Mr. Schroeder only four months ahead of parliamentary elections Sept. 27.

Mr. Kohl has been chancellor since 1982 but Germany is suffering record post-war levels of unemployment with almost five million out of work, and many Germans see the lumbering, 68-year-old leader as a poor choice compared to the dynamic, media-savvy Mr. Schroeder, 54.

Mr. Kohl's glitter as the architect of German reunification in 1990 has faded and he recently lost out on his strongest card, European integration, when France and Germany bickered over who would head the new European Central Bank (ECB) that is to run the euro, the European single currency.

He has also been unable to push through parliament his tax reform programme.

The CDU congress here could be Mr. Kohl's last chance to kick his campaign into high gear in time to make a difference.

The chancellor, who has often battled from behind in his 16 years in office, has repeatedly said that the only poll that counts is the election itself.

Mr. Kohl got an unexpected boost last week when U.S. President Bill Clinton all but endorsed his candidacy while in Germany to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Berlin airlift.

In Bremen, Mr. Kohl is hoping to duplicate the comeback he began ahead of the previous election in 1994 when he made a combative speech at a CDU congress in Hamburg.

"You will see a change," one adviser said. "He will present concrete proposals on unemployment, the economy, fiscal reforms, internal security and education."

"The (SPD) have up until now not put on the table clear programmes. It is much more of a personality show. Where are the clear-cut measures," said the adviser, who asked not to be named.

Mr. Kohl is also expected to raise the spectre of the menace of the former East German Communists, now the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), whom he has already said Mr. Schroeder wants to use to form a government alliance.

CDU Saxony state Governor Kurt Biedenkopf told reporters here Monday that the PDS were unlike other East European Communist parties not oriented to the West.

Mr. Biedenkopf said that rather than presenting a positive message, the PDS had a "vested interest in maintaining that (German) unification has not been a success."

He said the SPD was doing a "dangerous thing" in forming a tacit alliance with the PDS in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt.

The SPD has not looked good in failing to reach a coalition with the CDU in Saxony-Anhalt, where the far-right German People's Union (DPU) scored 12.9 per cent in a state election April 26.

Mr. Kohl has refused to let his party join a coalition that would include former Communists and claimed that the SPD was not serious about fighting the far-right.

The CDU is expected in Bremen to reconfirm Mr. Kohl as its candidate for chancellor and adopt a platform centred on fiscal reform of some 30 billion marks (\$16.5 billion) to lower employment costs and make it easier for companies to hire workers.



Serb police drags a student out at the Technical Faculty of the University of Pristina as Serb students refused to let Albanian students reenter the faculty (AFP photo)

Police end Serb student sit-in in Kosovo

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — Police removed about 100 Serb students from a university building in the Kosovo capital Pristina overnight Sunday to end a sit-in protest over the readmission of ethnic Albanian students.

About 30 police pulled out the students one by one from three technical faculties they had been occupying for some 10 days, the same source said.

As they left, students threw stones at the building, breaking several windows. A police vehicle was outside the empty building Monday morning.

The majority Albanian population in the troubled province is demanding independence from Serbia. Around 160 people have died in daily incidents since a major Serb crackdown on separatists in March, in the latest flare-up of violence.

Sunday's police intervention came after the Serb ministry of education decided to give the students until May 15 to vacate the premises, in the provincial capital of the Yugoslav province of Kosovo.

The keys to the building were sent to an Albanian official, Abdul Rahman, Friday.

Some 350,000 school pupils and university students and their teachers had to withdraw from Kosovo's educational establishments in 1991 for refusing to accept teaching programmes imposed from Belgrade.

Two accords, signed this year and in 1996, arrange for some educational establishments to be returned to Albanian control before Sept. 30.

The scheme aims to reintegrate ethnic Albanians into the educational system.

Afghan opposition launches fierce attack

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Opposition soldiers launched a fierce attack Monday on positions held by the Taliban religious army in northern Afghanistan.

Fighting raged around the key town of Ishkamish in northern Takhar province, said opposition spokesman Mohammad Arif.

The opposition assault followed meetings among members of the anti-Taliban alliance in northern Afghanistan to settle their internal squabbling. The attack was one of the first joint assaults against the Taliban in recent months.

There were no immediate reports of casualties or reports of territorial gains by either side.

The assault also followed a deadly bombing raid by Taliban jets Sunday. Opposition forces said 30 people were killed and scores more were injured when a bomb slammed into a fruit market in Taloqan, the provincial capital of Takhar province, the stronghold of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Saturday several leaders of the alliance met in Taloqan to try to resolve the differences which have plagued the alliance, said Mr. Arif.

Meanwhile the Taliban army waged a blistering assault against opposition soldiers barely 20 kilometres north of Kabul throughout Monday.

Apparently no territory exchanged hands. Despite the heavy fighting raging both in northern Afghanistan and sporadically north of the capital of Kabul, Mr. Arif said the opposition still was willing to go to the negotiation table to find a peaceful end to two decades of war.

However, Mr. Arif said the opposition alliance, which rules in roughly 15 per cent of Afghanistan, believes the Taliban religious militia is not interested in a negotiated settlement.

"The Taliban still insist on solving the problems of Afghanistan through fighting," said Mr. Arif.

The United Nations and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference are trying to negotiate a peace agreement between the two sides.

The Taliban control 85 per cent of Afghanistan, where it has imposed a harsh version of Islamic law.

Murdered Rwandan ex-minister should have testified on genocide

ARUSHA, Tanzania (AFP) — Rwandan opposition politician and ex-Minister Seth Sendashonga, just murdered in Kenya, should have testified at the U.N. war crimes tribunal on genocide, an agency report said Monday.

The Hironelle news agency, covering the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda's 1994 ethnic genocide, quoted a defence lawyer as saying that Sendashonga had been due to be a witness in two cases before the court.

Sendashonga, who was assassinated Saturday in Nairobi, was to have appeared on behalf of former district administrator Clement Kayishema and businessman Obed Ruzinda, said French lawyer Pascal Besnier.

The former interior minister had agreed to appear as an expert witness before the court in Arusha in northern Tanzania, according to defence counsel who spoke to him a week before he was

shot. Mr. Besnier stated that Sendashonga had been willing to appear openly before the court, but wanted the actual date disclosed as late as possible for his own safety.

The moderate Hutu was killed, however, by unidentified gunmen in an attack blamed by the exiled opposition on the Kigali regime dominated by the mainly Tutsi former rebels of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).

Sendashonga had joined the RPF before it won a civil war in July 1994, putting an end to the organised slaughter of up to 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus by Hutu extremists, in a bloodbath triggered by the killing the previous April of elected Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana.

Initially, Sendashonga served in an RPF-appointed government, but he and Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu quit and

went into exile and opposition in August 1995, carrying out major human rights abuses.

Mr. Besnier said that Sendashonga had agreed to go to Arusha "because he was opposed to the regression afflicting some supposed genocidal killers and the manipulation of witnesses."

The lawyer said he could reconstitute some of the evidence Sendashonga was due to give from notes he had left and the work of his colleagues. The prosecution has reportedly said it does not oppose such items being brought before the court, Hironelle reported.

Sendashonga's murder, following a previous, unsuccessful attempt on his life, came after he last month condemned the public executions in Rwanda of 22 genocide convicts, arguing that their shooting by firing squad would wreck prospects for peace and national reconciliation.

Pearson becomes global leader of education publishing with U.S. purchase

LONDON (AFP) — Pearson media group said Monday that it had become the world's biggest player in education publishing, after it agreed to pay \$3.6 billion for Viacom's Simon and Schuster unit.

Pearson will combine the business with its Addison Wesley Longman outfit "to form the world's leading international education business."

Chief executive of Pearson, Marjorie Scardino, said in a statement: "Education is one of the great growth industries

of our time. This is a tremendous opportunity to meet, in print and electronically, the growing demands of students of all ages and in all parts of the world for stimulating and effective educational programmes."

Pearson hopes that the fusion with its existing education publisher will create annual savings of \$130 million by 2000.

It hopes that the link-up will create a "strong platform for growth in the rapidly expanding global education market."

To finance part of the deal, Pearson agreed to sell its Hicks, Muse, Tate and Furst Inc (Hicks Muse) business for about \$1 billion. This was set against the total \$4.6 billion value of its purchase.

Mr. Simon and Mr. Schuster's education businesses generated operating profits of \$261 million on sales of \$1.9 billion last year.

Addison Wesley Longman, meanwhile, made operating profits of \$98 million on sales of \$924 million.

Australian scientists begin autopsies on Egyptian mummies

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian scientists began autopsies Monday on three ancient Egyptian mummies to find out more about their lifestyles and to get insights into the evolution of diseases such as cancer and syphilis.

Sydney University researchers expect the series of DNA tests will also establish how the trio from Luxor, a priest, cult singer and a child, died.

Scans last week showed the priest and female singer were in their mid-20s and the female child about 10 years old.

The woman, named Merueh, dates from about 1,000 BC while the priest, called Pediasheket, dates back to about 700 BC. The young girl was from the

second century AD. The first tests involve inserting a tiny camera into a small hole in each of the mummies' chest and abdominal cavities.

Tissue samples for DNA analysis and histology, the study of the minute structure of the tissue and organs, will also be taken.

Professor Allan Spigelman, head of surgical science at Newcastle University north of Sydney, said he hoped traces of diseases such as cancer, syphilis, tuberculosis, cholera, bilharzia and malaria would be evident in the preserved bodies.

DNA fingerprinting would also reveal the ancestry of the trio. "Scientific research has taken a quantum leap over

the years. We hope results from these tests will shed some light on those medieval times and hopefully assist our current modern-time life and medicine," Prof. Spigelman told reporters here.

"We want to know how much DNA we can find, and to basically see if bacteria from 3,000 years ago is similar to today's bacteria and if it can help treat modern-day disease."

The mummies were brought to Australia in the middle of the last century by Sir Charles Nicholson, one of the founders of Sydney University. The mummies have remained in the university museum since.

Test results will be known in several months.



Physical anthropologist Professor Mark Spigelman (left) from the University College in London holds up a vial which will hold a core sample from the mummies for DNA testing as his brother Allan, a professor of Surgery at Newcastle University and the curator of the Nicholson Museum Karin Sowada look on at Sydney University (AFP photo)

Lebed takes first step towards Kremlin with Krasnoyarsk win

KRASNOYARSK, Russia (AFP) — Maverick Russian nationalist Alexander Lebed swept into power Monday as governor of the vast Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk with a handsome election victory which could revive his Kremlin ambitions.

Mr. Lebed, the gruff, outspoken former army general who has made no secret of his designs on the Russian presidency, easily beat off the challenge of incumbent Valery Zubov by almost 20 points in Sunday's second-round, run-off vote.

The gravel-voiced former national security supreme garnered 57.22 per cent of the vote to Mr. Zubov's 38.27, according to preliminary results released after all votes were counted. Turnout reached a record 62.65 per cent, slightly higher than that of the first round balloting three weeks ago.

Mr. Lebed, whose no-nonsense nationalism won him 11 million votes and third place in the 1996 presidential elections, stressed Sunday that he had no immediate plans to challenge for the Kremlin, reiterating that he would be too busy running the region to think of presidential elections due in 2000.

"I see no reason for me to aspire to this post," he said of the presidency, on learning of his impressive win Sunday.

"A big and difficult job awaits me," he added. "I have been given a mandate to govern and I will do it in a reasonable and circumspect manner because the people have had enough and for many of them this is the last hope."

But in an ominous aside, the man who has been compared

to Chile's General Augusto Pinochet, added: "From now on I will carry more weight in Moscow, without a doubt."

And political leaders in Moscow were in no doubt as to what Mr. Lebed's victory Sunday signified.

"This victory is the retired general's launchpad for (the presidential campaign in) 2000," said state Duma lower house of parliament speaker Gennady Seleznev.

"If Lebed behaves astutely in the future, he could garner a number of votes in the 2000 elections," added Alexander Shokhin, leader of the Duma's centrist Our Home Is Russia faction.

But Mr. Lebed's pledge to restore the region to health before turning his thoughts to the Kremlin leaves him with much to do if he is to stand in presidential elections in 2000.

"We have factories working at 20 per cent of their capacity, military industry at a total standstill, and the most important thing is to resume production, even before paying salaries," said Anatoly Logachev, deputy president of the regional trade union federation.

As for his political and economic orientation, analysts were watching closely for signs of appointments to key regional posts to see which way Mr. Lebed would bend.

"We do not know what type of policies he will carry out, more Communist or more liberal," said Valery Kinlets, a first round candidate for the liberal opposition bloc Yabloko.

"Lebed is an unpredictable man."

Mr. Lebed's decision to run in Krasnoyarsk, a region one-

third the size of the United States situated some 4,000 kilometres east of Moscow, was seen as a bid to establish a power base to resurrect political fortunes which have been flagging ever since he was axed as Russia's security

supremo in 1996. The post of governor will not only give him a political and financial power base in a mineral-rich territory, but a seat in Russia's upper house Federation Council, and an administrative staff and support network that could be marshalled to ensure Mr. Lebed remains a thorn in the side of the government.

But Mr. Lebed, 48, has dismissed all suggestion of career-bagging and played down his Kremlin aspirations, saying that it would take more than two years to turn Krasnoyarsk's fortunes around.

"The pre-condition for running in the presidential election is the rebirth of the region. I'm going to concentrate on that and, when it's done, I'll think about the presidency," he said.

Mr. Lebed shot to prominence after his election success in 1996, whereupon he was swiftly co-opted onto President Boris Yeltsin's ticket for a second-round run-off against Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov.

But the marriage of convenience lasted scarcely four months, and despite extricating the Kremlin from the mire of its Chechen war fiasco, Mr. Lebed was ousted from his role as chair of the National Security Council in October 1996, consigning him to a spell in the political wilderness.

Wife of Paris mayor placed in custody in fraud investigation

VERSAILLES, France (AFP) — Xavier Tiberi, wife of Paris Mayor Jean Tiberi, was placed in police custody here Monday in connection with a public payroll fraud investigation involving a former official of her husband's political party, a police

source said.

The 10-month-old probe is examining what the Regional Accounting Office (RAO) says were some dozen "employees" of the offices of then General Council President Xavier Dugoin who "never appeared on the flow chart... never

had an office."

Mr. Dugoin, of the main opposition Rally for the Republic (RPR) party, at the time was president of the General Council in the Essonne region.

Among the allegedly ghost employees in his office cited by the RAO

were his wife and her maid.

Madame Tiberi is cited in the investigation as having signed a contract on March 9, 1994, as an associate of Mr. Dugoin's office.

She resigned nine months later, said the RAO, and was paid 210,779 francs (\$35,000) for preparing a "questionable" report on French-speaking countries.

She arrived at police headquarters in a chauffeur-driven car which raced through a crowd of reporters into the courtyard.

The investigation is part of a wider probe into alleged fraud involving the RPR party, which won a majority in the Paris region's elections in March 1997.

World Extremists threaten

LONDON (AFP) — Northern Ireland peace talks, the latest in a series of attempts to end the conflict, are threatened by the resurgence of violence in the province. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) has threatened to resume its campaign of violence if the British government does not withdraw its troops from Northern Ireland. The IRA has also threatened to resume its campaign of violence if the British government does not withdraw its troops from Northern Ireland. The IRA has also threatened to resume its campaign of violence if the British government does not withdraw its troops from Northern Ireland.

Cambodian opposition boy

BANH (AFP) — Cambodian opposition leader Sen Euthy has been arrested by the government. Sen Euthy is a member of the opposition coalition, the National United Front. He was arrested on charges of inciting violence. The government has also arrested other opposition leaders. The opposition is demanding the release of Sen Euthy and the other arrested leaders. The opposition is also demanding the release of all political prisoners.

Moretti's new blends perso

ANNE, France (AFP) — Moretti's new film, "The Best of Me," is a blend of personal and political. The film is about a man who is a member of the resistance during the Second World War. The film is also about a man who is a member of the resistance during the Second World War. The film is also about a man who is a member of the resistance during the Second World War. The film is also about a man who is a member of the resistance during the Second World War.

Extremists continue to threaten peace in N. Ireland

LONDON (AFP) — Despite the Northern Ireland peace accord, the threat of violence by extremist groups in the embattled province remains, even more so since the IRA suffered a damaging split in its ranks this month.

A ceasefire declared by the hardline Protestant militia, the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF), to help the "No" campaign days before the May 22 referendum should be cause for optimism.

But it has not inspired much faith that the LVF's sectarian killers have laid aside their weapons for good.

On the Catholic side, a dissident group describing itself as the "true" IRA came into emergence this month with the announcement that it was calling off a 10-month-old IRA ceasefire because the "old leadership" had betrayed the pro-United Ireland republican cause.

It was the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) ceasefire last July that made the peace talks possible.

British and Irish police are taking the threat of renewed violence seriously, especially since the new splinter group would appear to have access to sophisticated IRA bomb-making technology.

The leader of the break-

away group was believed to be a former senior official in the IRA who had attracted as many as 50 militants to his cause.

Its first official act of violence was relatively low-key: a mortar shell explosion which caused no casualties.

But it is suspected that the splinter group already showed its capacity for destruction in April, with the seizure of a 500 kilogramme bomb that police said was destined for an attack on the British mainland.

"True IRA" is believed to be linked to a breakaway republican movement, the Committee of 32, for the 32 counties of Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, founded five months ago by the sister of Bobby Sands, who died of a hunger strike in prison in 1981.

The IRA has also been under pressure from two long-standing splinter groups who see the peace agreement as a betrayal of the Irish cause: the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and the Continuity IRA (CIRA).

The INLA has remained small since its creation in 1975 but it was the INLA that started a wave of tit-for-tat killings that left 15 dead in less than four months when it murdered the head of an extremist Protestant militia in

Belfast's Maze Prison in December.

The CIRA, whose recruiting pool is the peace process's disillusioned flotsam, has been held responsible for numerous bomb and mortar attacks.

In the Protestant camp, the LVF — the most hardline of the Protestant militias — has until now refused to accept the ceasefires observed by mainstream Protestant paramilitary groups.

Responsible for the blind killings of several Catholics in recent months, the LVF opposed the peace talks from the outset and threatened Protestant leaders who accept the agreement's compromises.

But in mid-May, it declared "an unequivocal ceasefire" in Northern Ireland, saying it was aimed at encouraging a "no" vote in a referendum on last month's peace accord.

The most radical of the splinter militia on both sides have the most to lose with the end of armed conflict in Northern Ireland.

They are small in number but feed on a reciprocal bilateral hatred, vacillating between ideological crusade and common law crime. Sectarian violence is their raison d'être and their livelihood.



Jaswant Singh, a leader of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and vice-chairman of the Planning Commission, gestures during a news conference in New Delhi where he said that India had been forced to break its own moratorium on nuclear testing because of a deterioration in the security environment. But he said the tests were not directed at any one country and expressed his hope for better relations with neighbours China and Pakistan (Reuters photo)

India: Pakistan has right to defend itself

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Pakistan has every right to act in its own defence, a senior Indian official said Monday as Pakistan threatened to set off a nuclear device in answer to five Indian test explosions last week.

Jaswant Singh, a powerful leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party that is the main component of India's ruling coalition, did not directly address a possible Pakistani test. But he said relations between the two neighbours and longtime rivals would have to be governed by a principle "of equal and legitimate security concerns."

"India can scarcely deny to Pakistan that which it claims for itself," said Mr. Singh, who is also deputy chairman of the federal planning commission, an economic forecaster.

After setting off three underground nuclear explosions on May 11 and two more on May 13, India declared itself capable of building the bomb. The tests provoked sanctions from the United States, Japan and other countries, and fears of a regional arms race with Pakistan.

India said it needed a nuclear defence against Pakistan and China, neighbours with whom it has fought a total of four wars. China is a declared nuclear power that India believes has shared its weapons technology with Pakistan.

Mr. Singh said his government still wanted better relations with Pakistan, with

whom India has fought three wars since 1948 and still engages in frequent border skirmishes.

"Our hope is that notwithstanding the developments, our relations shall continue to improve," he said, but added prime ministers of the two countries have not been in contact since India's tests.

Protesters in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad burned an effigy of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee Monday.

India claim to being a nuclear power after just five tests last week and a sixth in 1974 has been questioned, but experts don't doubt the sophistication of its nuclear programme. The May 11 test included the detonation of a powerful thermonuclear device.

R. Chidambaram, chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, acknowledged to reporters Sunday that the phrase "thermonuclear device" was often equated with a hydrogen bomb, which would be a devastating weapon. He refused to detail the exact composition of India's device, but indicated its explosive impact was considerably less than that of a hydrogen bomb.

Speaking to reporters Monday, Mr. Singh said indicated that New Delhi did not already have a nuclear bomb, and would not stockpile nuclear weapons.

"No one requires a nuclear arsenal," Mr. Singh said. "It is India's position that the existing arsenal should be improved and polished."

India will discuss CTBT subject to reservations

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India is ready to discuss the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) as long as its reservations are taken into account, a senior government adviser said Monday.

"We are ready to engage in meaningful discussions for India's subscription to the CTBT subject to our reservations," said Jaswant Singh, a close aide to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Mr. Singh responded to questions on whether he could confirm British Prime Minister Tony Blair's statement Sunday that India had agreed to start "immediate" talks on joining the CTBT.

Mr. Blair told reporters at the G8 summit in Britain Sunday that Mr. Vajpayee had assured him in a telephone conversa-

tion Friday that India was prepared to begin talks immediately.

Mr. Singh, one of a handful of officials who knew in advance about last week's five nuclear blasts, did not say when India would start discussions over the CTBT or what the reservations were.

India is one of 44 countries which must sign and ratify the September 1996 CTBT within three years of its launch for it to come into force, but it has consistently refused to do so.

New Delhi maintains the treaty has no proper time-frame for disarmament and that it discriminates against non-Western powers.

India has also objected to the CTBT's no-test verification clause, arguing that it was not an impartial international mechanism.

Japan envoy presses Pakistan against N-test

ISLAMABAD (R) — A Japanese envoy began talks in Islamabad Monday aimed at dissuading Pakistan from carrying out threats to conduct a nuclear test and hinted that it had much to gain if it observed restraint.

Seiichi Noboru, sent by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, said after talks with Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan that his impression was that the Islamabad government had yet to make up its mind what to do.

"My understanding is that the Pakistani government is reviewing the situation very cautiously, very carefully," said Mr. Noboru, who was scheduled to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Mr. Noboru played down reports in the Pakistani media quoting Mr. Khan as saying that the decision facing Islamabad after five tests by arch-foe India last week was not "if but when."

"He (Mr. Khan) did not tell me that the Pakistani government has already made a decision," Mr. Noboru told reporters.

The foreign minister has been much more hardline in public statements than Mr. Sharif, who told party workers at the weekend that Pakistan had not yet made a decision but could ready a nuclear test within 12-24 hours.

In public, Mr. Sharif has told his 120 million people that the country must address its legitimate security concerns and said Pakistan could match and even surpass India's nuclear programme.

The Japanese envoy was said by officials to be carrying a letter from Mr. Hashimoto urging Islamabad not to cross the nuclear threshold and warning it would clamp economic sanctions on Pakistan, as it did last week on India.

Asked if he was offering Islamabad any financial or diplomatic inducements to pull back from the brink, the envoy replied: "The world opinion is very sympathetic to the Pakistani government."

Japan rapidly joined the U.S. last week in announcing sanctions against New Delhi which are estimated to total some \$20 billion. India says its economy can survive such penalties.

The Pakistani government is under intense pressure from public opinion and all political parties to respond to India's tests by proving with a nuclear blast that it can match India's stated claim to be a nuclear arms power.

Mr. Noboru said he briefed Mr. Khan on the outcome of the Group of Eight (G8) industrialised states in Birmingham,

England, at the weekend which condemned India but failed to agree to U.S. appeals on across-the-board sanctions against India.

Pakistani government officials believe the sanctions against India are lukewarm and are seeking assurances from G8 states that New Delhi will be isolated and punished for carrying out its first tests since 1974.

Foreign ministry officials said that envoys were being sent to the United States, Britain, France, Germany and close ally China to lobby support for Pakistan's position on Indian testing.

Mr. Sharif has publicly denied that he is willing to barter security concerns against pledges of more aid or relief on a \$30 billion foreign debt weight on a fragile economy.

Pakistani officials have dismissed as irrelevant suggestions that the United States could resolve a dispute over 28 F-16 fighter jets which Washington failed to deliver in 1990 to punish Pakistan for its nuclear programme.

The U.S. government never repaid more than half a billion dollars Pakistan paid for the equipment and the issue was expected to be resolved during a visit by President Bill Clinton, which is expected in November.

Sri Lanka mounts manhunt for Jaffna mayor's assassins

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan police and army have launched a major search for two Tamil Tiger gunmen believed to have assassinated the woman mayor of the embattled northern town of Jaffna, police said Monday.

Security forces have questioned nearly 100 people in and around the Jaffna neighbourhood where Sarojini Yogeswaran, 60, was shot dead Sunday, officials said.

"Police have got a good description of the assassins," a police official here said. "A manhunt is now on for the two men who had infiltrated the town to carry out the attack."

A front organisation of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) called the Sangilian Force claimed responsibility for the killing, a press report here said Monday.

It said the group had in a letter to a newspaper in Jaffna claimed Yogeswaran was killed because she refused to step down from office. However, there has been no reaction from the LTTE to the murder.

It was seen by politicians as a blow to moderates and a setback to rebuilding the war-ravaged region which security forces wrested from the LTTE.

Government and opposition leaders united in condemning Sunday's killing of Yogeswaran who in January won the first council elections in the region

for 15 years.

Her moderate Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) branded the killing a cowardly act and said it was carried out by the LTTE which had been accused of wiping out the TULF leadership, including Yogeswaran's husband in 1989.

"It was her singular aspiration to restore the civil administration and democratic way of life in Jaffna that inspired her to enter active politics," local government Minister Alavi Moulana said in a statement.

Yogeswaran's TULF, an unarmed group unlike many other Tamil parties, said it was looking for a "courageous" politician to become the new mayor of Jaffna.

In May 1975, then Mayor Alfred Duraipah was gunned down by the LTTE, marking a turning point in the separatist conflict which has since claimed more than 55,000 lives.

Western and Asian diplomats here said the killing of Yogeswaran would be a serious blow to rehabilitation efforts in the region.

Three years ago, when the Tigers were driven from there, the government estimated reconstruction would cost more than \$1 billion and the Jaffna municipal council was to play a key role.

Yogeswaran entered politics after her legislator husband, V. Yogeswaran, was

killed by the LTTE in Colombo.

She had said that despite threats from the guerrillas ahead of the January elections, she was not afraid.

Her slaying came three days after a Tiger suicide bomber killed an army brigadier in the Jaffna peninsula as he was about to leave for Colombo on transfer.

Western diplomats said the killing of Brigadier Larry Wijeratne, a member of the majority Sinhalese community, was a major blow to government efforts to win over minority Tamils.

The government run Daily News and the pro-opposition Island newspaper carried editorials Monday slamming the Tigers for both killings.

"What they (the Tigers) seem to fear most is humanity and the people who have this in abundant measure," the Daily News said.

The island said those who advocate peace talks with the LTTE must share responsibility for the killings.

"Those foreign powers who keep saying be nice to the Tigers and treat them well are very much responsible for the deaths of Tamils like Mrs. Yogeswaran who want their people to be really free and not under some fascist juvenile thugs manipulated by international financiers from the West," it said.

U.N. reports new incidents of ethnic violence

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Several houses belonging to Muslim refugees were damaged over the weekend by arson or explosions in a southern part of the country controlled by Bosnian Croat hardliners, officials said Monday.

So far in 1998, a year of large-scale refugee returns in Bosnia, a total of 33 Muslim houses have been damaged in similar incidents in the area of Stolac, 115 kilometres southwest of Sarajevo.

The incidents were part of a trend of ethnic violence that Croat hardliners have orchestrated since the end of the Bosnian war in 1995. The Croats hope to prevent Muslim refugees from reclaiming homes they were forced to leave two years earlier.

In other parts of the country, Bosnian Serb or Muslim hardliners have used similar methods to prevent refugees from returning.

The house of a Muslim refugee who was supposed

to return to Stolac was burned Saturday, and another abandoned Muslim house in the centre of town was set ablaze Sunday, said Liam McDowall, a U.N. spokesman.

A third Muslim house was slightly damaged Sunday in the town of Capljina near Stolac, when an explosive device detonated in front of it, Mr. McDowall said.

The Stolac area is one of the worst hot-spots of continued ethnic violence against refugees in Bosnia.

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Fight fire with fire

WOULD ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu threaten to burn Washington down if U.S. President Clinton pressured him for a further withdrawal from the West Bank if he would not be able to carry out his threat? Certainly not.

Netanyahu and his fellow Jewish activists in the U.S. have managed to put enough pressure on Congress, which in turn put pressure on the administration, turning every hope that Clinton and Secretary Albright might twist the arm of Israel into a mirage.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu's offer to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank, as proposed by the U.S., is only a smoke screen because he made that conditional on no further redeployment as stipulated in the Oslo agreement.

What Netanyahu has been able to achieve so far is to neutralise the U.S. administration, infuriate the Palestinians, please his coalition partners, and put the peace process on hold while expanding settlements all over the West Bank.

It must be crystal clear now to all those involved in the process that Netanyahu is doing exactly what his mentor, former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, said he wanted to do after the launch of the Madrid talks in 1991, i.e., stall and pretend to be negotiating while changing the facts on the ground and tightening Israel's grip on the West Bank. In a nutshell, Netanyahu is against peace based on the principle of land-for-peace. He is for Israel's control over the whole West Bank and the long-term goal of squeezing the Palestinians out.

The question then is what to do. Where to go from here? How could Netanyahu be convinced of the importance of giving up the West Bank to the Palestinians to build their state and leave Israel in peace? Who could influence the U.S. administration to be more assertive in its dealing with the hardline Israeli prime minister? Could anyone convince the U.S. Congress and the American Jewish lobby that Israel is not the only embodiment of their interests in the Middle East?

The only answer to all of this is that only the Arabs can make Israel change its mind and the U.S. its heart.

In June 1996, the Arab leaders meeting in Cairo decreed that normalisation of relations with Israel was contingent on progress on Palestinian-Israeli track. They threatened that if no progress were achieved in a year, they would reconsider their ties with the Jewish state, implicitly threatening to impose the old economic boycott on Israel.

These same leaders are called upon to meet today and consider whatever possible measures to dissuade Netanyahu from continuing into the course he has chosen and strengthen the hand of the Clinton administration. It is time for joint, albeit rational, Arab action.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan blamed the Arab countries for failing to take a collective and firm stand against Netanyahu's intransigence and his disregard for the peace accords he signed with the Palestinians. Had the Arabs adopted a firm stand in deed rather than word the Europeans and the Americans would have been forced to deal with Netanyahu differently, said the writer. The U.S. for its part is to blame for failing as a peace broker to end the deadlock in the peace process and for failing to force Israel to comply with the peace requirements, he added. But while President Clinton's hands are tied by the Zionist lobby in the U.S. Congress, the Arabs' hands are free to take appropriate action that would give Washington and the Europeans some excuse for exerting pressure on Israel, continued the writer. The least the Arabs can do is to hold a summit to discuss what action should be taken, said the writer. But he said some Arab leaders shun a summit because they either believe that their own interests will be endangered or because they have capitulated to Netanyahu's desires.

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi said India's nuclear programme represents a step backward in the current efforts to improve international relations. Perhaps the Arab states back India's nuclear programmes and call for the Arab World to follow suit in order to achieve parity with the Israeli nuclear deterrent, he said. But, he said, in the case of India, nuclear escalation is directed against Pakistan and China, India's close neighbours, and if the escalation continues Asia, including the Arab World, will face real danger. India is arming itself with nuclear weapons at a time when the world's nations are desecrating their nuclear capabilities in the age of open markets and democracy, he added. What is more important for India, he said, is to give priority to combating poverty and backwardness rather than committing itself to a suicidal war with its neighbours. The Arabs should realise that a nuclear power in Asia does not back their cause because India has been collaborating with Israel and because the Arab states who lack nuclear capability have been demanding that their own region which includes Israel should be free from all weapons of mass destruction in order to ensure their safety and security.

The View from Fourth Circle

'This is the task of our generation and the one to come'

Rami G. Khouri

IN READING the following, what does it make you think of? "The first of our misfortunes, destined to have the most fateful consequences, was independence: in liberating us, it divided us. This fragmentation caused tyrannies to multiply, and the battles between tyrants made the meddling of the United States all the easier. Thus (our) crisis...has two faces. On the one side, fragmentation led to dispersion, dispersion to weakness, and weakness to what is today a crisis of independence.... On the other, the defeat of democracy means the perpetuation of injustice and of material and moral misery, whoever the winner, colonel or commissar."

And what about this passage: "...the features that characterize (our) situation: the fragmentation into tiny republics that are viable neither economically nor politically and that also lack a clear national identity (they are fragments of a body that has been torn to pieces); oligarchies and militarism, allied to U.S. imperialism and fostered by it; the absence of democratic traditions and the weakness of the middle class and the urban proletariat; the appearance of minorities of professional revolutionaries from the upper bourgeoisie and the middle class...."

They sound like a critical dissident's description of the modern Middle East, Africa, or Asia? These words were, in fact, written about Central and South America in the 1980s by the great Mexican Nobel Prize winning poet, writer and philosopher Octavio Paz, who passed away last month. (The quotations in this article are all from the essays in the book *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds: Reflections on Contemporary History*, by Octavio Paz, translated by Helen R. Lane, Palatin, London, 1992).

Octavio Paz' death should not be seen as primarily a Mexican or Latin American loss. Rather, his ideas should prompt us to pause for a moment and to acknowledge the truly universal values that he expressed through his analysis of historical forces and contemporary challenges in Latin America — forces and challenges that are likely to define the course of global history for years to come. His ability to address universal themes through commentaries on conditions in his own neighbourhood reminds us that the majority of the 5.5 billion people of our world still consistently grapple with the same issues that have plagued Latin

America throughout this century — the century that defined Octavio Paz' lifetime.

He reminds us that "the nineteenth century began with three great revolutions: those waged by the American colonies, by the French, and by the nations of Latin America. All three won a victory on the battlefield, but the political and social results were quite different in each case."

The results were different in the developing South, he says, because of several related factors: our imbalanced and often involuntary encounters with the imperial power of the United States and Europe; the consequent fragmentation of our Southern societies into sovereign states of often dubious validity, dependent economies, and confused identity; the common advent of autocratic and often tyrannical regimes; and the usually incoherent attempt by the developing, ancient cultures of the South to both activate their rich cultural legacy and identity and also to imitate Western national models and political values.

"All these contradictions culminate in one: our constitutions are democratic, but the real and omnipresent reality is dictatorship. Our political reality sums up the contradictory modernity of Latin America," he writes. The prevalent quest throughout the Third World to be both modern and traditional is a logical consequence of modern history. Paz says, "the great mutation of the twentieth century has not been the revolution of the proletariat in the industrial countries of the West, but the resurrection of civilisations that gave every appearance of having turned to stone: Japan, China, India, Iran, the Arab World. On the brutal but vivifying contact with European imperialism, they opened their eyes, rose again from the dust, and began to stir. Today these nations are confronting a similar problem, one that each of them is endeavouring to resolve in its own way: modernisation. The first to have succeeded is Japan."

The Iranian revolution, he notes, reflects the common trend of the end of this century, which he terms "revolt as resurrection" — adding that "almost all the great social upheavals of recent years have been resurrections, the most notable being of religious feeling, generally allied with nationalist movements."

Paz says "the attitude of Americans is yet another example of their insensitivity to the outside world: they are, truly, outside of history," and adds that "the great wound of the West has been the separation of morality and history," but goes on to suggest that "the secret of the resurrection of the democracies — and hence of true civilisation — lies in the re-establishment of the dialogue between morality and history. This is the task of our generation and the one to come."

Most developing societies have experienced difficulties in instituting democratic rule, he says, not because democracy is not the right choice, but rather because "we have limited ourselves to imitating foreign models. The task awaiting Latin Americans, one requiring efforts of imagination at once bold and realistic, is to discover in our own traditions those seeds and roots — they are there — that will enable us to implant firmly and nourish a genuine democracy."

Elections are essential but not everything in democratic rule, Paz says, and "to be called 'democratic' a regime must fulfill other requirements, such as the preservation of human rights and basic freedoms, pluralism, and, above all, respect for the individual and for minorities."

He concludes that the three key principles of democracy are dialogue with the adversary, to resist both nihilism and terror, and "to recognise that the defence of democracy in our own country is inseparable from solidarity with those who are fighting for it in totalitarian countries or under the tyrannies and military dictatorships of Latin America and other continents."

The death of this great man recalls his rich life and ideas, which in turn remind us that we in the Arab World are part of a massive global movement of people seeking common aspirations and suffering from common, imperially-tinged legacies. It seems to me that we have as much to learn about viable nationhood, legitimate statehood, meaningful modernisation, and effective democracy from our colleagues in the rest of the developing South as we do from the American and other Western democracies that offer an intriguing yet problematic model of modernity that is often both ahistorical and amoral — as Paz says us even after his death.

Kosovo's apostle of non-violence faces acid test

By Kurt Schork

Reuters

PRISTINA, Serbia. — Having preached for the better part of a decade that a non-violent response to Serbian oppression in Kosovo would lead to Western intervention and independence, Ibrahim Rugova now confronts bitter reality. For years the ethnic Albanian majority in Kosovo, a Serbian province bordering Albania and the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, turned the other cheek as police ruthlessly cracked down on any expression of their separate identity.

But in the end it was not the restraint of Rugova's people in the face of arbitrary arrests, beatings, torture and murder that caused the international community's crisis-driven Balkan policy to lurch into high gear.

The West regarded misdeeds in as distasteful but tolerable until Rugova lost control of his people and the liberation army (KLA), Europe's fastest growing armed

insurgency, stepped up its attacks on Serbian police. Only after years of repression had spawned a low-intensity conflict that threatened a wider Balkan war did Washington despatch its top trouble-shooter, Richard Holbrooke.

Holbrooke, who brokered an end to the Bosnia war in 1995, coaxed Rugova, president of the self-styled republic of Kosovo, and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic to meet last Friday. Rugova has found, like Bosnia President Alija Izetbegovic before him, that when the United States takes up your case it does so on its own terms and for its own reasons.

To satisfy Milosevic, the formal foreign mediation Rugova had demanded was downgraded to a discreet American off-stage presence during substantive negotiations set to begin between ethnic Albanian and Serbian delegations later this week.

The goal of independence, which bound Rugova and his people together through their long trials, also seemed to have fallen by

the way.

The United States, Europe and Russia are agreed that Kosovo's status must be resolved within Yugoslavia's existing borders, either by a grant of autonomy or by making it a third republic along with Serbia and Montenegro. Ethnic Albanians, with their distinct language and culture, are divided among three states: Albania, Macedonia and Yugoslavia. They make up about 90 per cent of Kosovo's 1.8 million people and have Europe's highest birth rate.

Diplomats fear that independence for Kosovo would destabilise neighbouring Macedonia, which has a substantial ethnic Albanian minority, setting the stage for a war that could involve even Greece and Turkey. Many believe Kosovo's freedom, and perhaps Rugova himself, are to be sacrificed on the altar of regional stability.

"Rugova has been given a poison pill and told to swallow it and he may have no choice," said one

Western diplomat in Kosovo's capital, Pristina. "This deal could destroy Rugova, shred his credibility as leader of Kosovo's Albanians and invite the KLA to take the big step from military operations into politics. If Rugova cannot deliver the KLA, he's finished."

Rugova's critics are sharpening their spears, eager to discard a man they say has mesmerised Kosovo Albanians into believing that the West will save them. "Rugova is a tragic figure, a man who sold the Albanian people an illusion," said Bajram Kosumi, an opposition politician, in a recent interview.

"The illusion was based on passivity and non-violence and on the assumption that the international community would deliver independence. Now people are beginning to realise that we must help ourselves if we want to be free."

If talks lead to a quick and substantial withdrawal of Serbian police from areas of Kosovo like Drenica and Decani where guerril-

la war is simmering then Rugova might be able to salvage his credibility and his non-violent cause. But the KLA answers to no known political master in Pristina and the insurgency is fast winning the hearts and minds of ethnic Albanians across Kosovo, especially in the countryside.

Milosevic may decide he cannot or will not withdraw his police until a final deal on Kosovo is done, locking his men and the insurgents into an ever-escalating cycle of violence that could dwarf the talks and their participants. Against this backdrop Rugova will meet the general council of his democratic league of Kosovo (LDK) on Monday to explain a negotiating strategy to its top 60 or so members.

Their reaction will provide an early indicator whether Rugova retains the standing to sell some thing less than independence to his ethnic Albanian constituents, assuming he and Milosevic can strike a deal at all.

Jerusalem's final status: Other critical dimensions to the Jerusalem question

By Muna Salman

SAN FRANCISCO — Final status negotiations are looming near. The fate of Jerusalem, if negotiated and accepted by both parties of the conflict, Palestinians and Israelis, could result in setting the stage for peace and reconciliation or a countdown towards further regional instability, an outcome most don't wish for. Israel's Likud is pushing for accelerated final status talks in its belief that a hawkish Israel can wrest a better deal ignoring in the process the bottom-line many Arabs and Muslims have set for a long lasting peace, a return to 1967 borders.

Over the decades, Jewish intellectuals in the U.S. have framed the Palestinian tragedy in reductionist terms using elemental arguments such as fighting terrorism and security for Israel versus Palestinians' human and property rights. A settlement ignoring the complexity of the Jerusalem question with its Pan-Arab and Pan-Islamic aspects is bound to fail. Europe, due to its colonial heritage, has traditionally maintained a keener understanding of the Mediterranean's historical dynamics. But many opinion leaders and policy makers in the U.S. do not grasp the full dimensions of the conflict over Jerusalem and the baseline solution yet.

With the pro-Israeli U.S. pressure groups coalescing to pave the way for a settlement favourable to Israel, the need to establish a single-issue Arab and Muslim bloc is at its greatest today. The short time frame and the unfavourable conditions for final status negotiations should leave little doubt for the need to promote a clear pro-Jerusalem agenda strictly along U.N. resolutions to avoid political confusion from the outset. Any revisionist interpretation of U.N. resolutions which does not return East Jerusalem to its 1967 borders should be rejected.

Presently, Israel is aiming to introduce a series of neutered Jerusalem options rang-

ing from designating alternative sites such as Abu Deis as East Jerusalem or other imaginative but still unacceptable alternatives such as token authority over Muslim and some Christian Holy Sites in the Holy City. While Israel and the U.S. may pressure PNA Chairman Arafat into such an arrangement, it will be a short-lived deal as demonstrated by Israel's own de facto breach of signed agreements they later deemed counter to their interests. Such a coerced arrangement is a recipe for disaster bound to collapse if and when Arafat departs. Or possibly sooner.

Not too many Palestinians, let alone most Arabs and Muslims, would endorse reconciliation with Israel when Palestinian authority over East Jerusalem is not secured. To the contrary, Palestinian and Muslim disillusionment will definitely lead to further mistrust and instability. And Jerusalem will remain a festering sore with unpredictable outcomes. In this environment, proponents of absolute solutions would undoubtedly win converts resulting in strengthening the rejectionist camp. And Arafat's regime and those who support it will be accorded the credibility and respect befitting of a Palestinian Vicly.

A local conflict with global roots

Jerusalem to Arabs and Muslims is greater than the sum of its parts. It is not about Palestinians and Israelis. It is not about Arabs and Zionists or Jews and Muslims. Jerusalem is viewed by Arabs and Muslims as the focus of a historical tug of war by which the West has sought to gain influence and in the process has inflicted serious violence on the indigenous population in specific and desecrated what is deeply sacred to Arabs and Muslims in general. Jerusalem is like no other place for Arabs both Muslims and Christians, and Muslims of all ethnic backgrounds.

The legal, religious, geopolitical, histori-

cal, and moral basis demanding a shared Jerusalem with Palestinian authority over East Jerusalem are well known and the solution widely accepted in international foreign policy circles. Regardless of the recent Israeli spins as to the pre-1967 status of Jerusalem, it is today an occupied territory. No ifs or buts about it. U.N. resolutions leave even less doubt as to the legal status of East Jerusalem.

Many Palestinians consider the religious and geopolitical significance of Palestine to have been both curse and bliss.

Had Muslims and Christians not accorded Palestine a measure of sacredness, chances are Palestinians would have been marginalised. Also, Israel's geography has been burdened by its wedge-like presence lodged at the heart of the Arab World. The symbolism behind the Israeli enforced Arab division has been deemed too painful and too humiliating to accept. And Jerusalem being at the heart of Palestine and the Arab World, has been endowed by Arab nationalists of all faiths with greater measures of reverence not accorded other Arab cities. Similar factors made Palestine an attractive but troublesome homeland for the Jews.

When analysing the Arab and Muslim popular discourse on Jerusalem and the historical psychology surrounding its loss, it conjures up images of waves of violence coming from the West in the form of the Crusaders. Arabs both Muslims and Christians have suffered immensely from the European's violent campaign of racial and cultural dominance under religious pretexts. After World War II, the loss of Jerusalem became a symbol of Western Colonialism and Imperialism leading to the demise of the last Islamic Empire. Presently, the American Christian right's steadfast support for total Israeli control over Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories against the remnants of Christian Arabs is a disturbing reminder of the West's historic and constantly repeating role in this con-

flict. To contemporary Arab and Muslim intellectuals, the establishment of Israel highlights Western cynicism. After violently persecuting its Jews, Europe managed to rid itself of its Orientals. With another cynical move, Europe sponsored a settlement to the Jewish question at the expense of the Palestinians and returned later to arbitrate the same conflict they have created and made a handsome profit selling weapons to the warring parties in the process.

The permanent loss of Jerusalem would be considered by Arabs and Muslims as the West's most racist crowning achievement and would deepen wounds that have begun to heal in the aftermath of World War II and the ensuing wars of liberation.

And if Jerusalem to the Jews is the symbol of return and an end to their exodus, to Arabs and Muslims, it is the focus of unconscionable Western-sponsored racial violence against its indigenous population. The element of injustice is too great to ignore. And the Western instigated violence and ensuing double-standards were too grotesque to fathom and accept. The resulting discontent gave birth to an increasing acceptance of militancy amongst Palestinians who were traditionally docile agrarian people. This rising militancy has been and continues to be a reaction to Jewish militancy and intransigence.

Given the complexity of the Jerusalem question, the only solution the Arab and Muslim seem prepared for as the absolute minimum will be along the lines of 1967 borders and supporting U.N. resolutions. In its absence, a no deal leaves room for future negotiations. A bad deal will widen the divide and could prove costly to both sides potentially expanding the scope of the conflict. Only the sharing of Jerusalem is a good solution. A fair settlement would strengthen the forces of peace and result in the eventual removal of the last vestige of centuries long conflict between East and West.

Feature

The Palestinian

Conflict

On March 25, 1998 Prof. Shihab al-Khouri delivered The Khouri Annual Distinguished Lecture at the Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. It is the third and final part of the lecture.

TODAY, AS Meron Benvenisti remarks, the area of mandated Palestine has a population of about 4.5 million, of whom 2.5 million are Palestinians; the massive Jewish emigration since 1948 has reduced the Palestinian population to about 40 per cent of the total. Within the next 10 to 15 years, it is estimated that the proportion of Palestinians will equal or even exceed the 50 per cent present composition between communities alternating as a host and a guest between violence and search for a political solution, with a shift to different grounds, to demographic change. Thus, if in the next decade Palestinians manage to transcend the difficulties and succeed in building a healthy, prosperous, and cohesive Palestine intimately linked to the PNA, the present balance of power, dominated by becoming irrelevant, sign of struggle are bound to change according to the new ground and economic process becoming

Because of its human and economic resources, the Palestinian American community could play a large part in the transformation of the Arab world. It is a responsibility that must first prove itself capable of building an infrastructure that will assure viable, sustainable

King declares union-gov

(Continued from page 1)

"The most serious from the situation that we endured in the past five decades, and from the 1967 and 1973 wars, unprepared and ill-planned steps that the Arabs set without an accurate analysis of the circumstances," Petra quoted the king as saying during the meeting.

The king said that Jordan took part in those wars out of national commitment to duty towards the Arab nation, despite the fact that it was not informed of the war in 1973.

"We went to Madrid with a consensus, and provided the Palestinians with an umbrella that enabled them to take part in the conference," the king said, in reference to the 1991 peace conference.

King Hussein reiterated Jordan's commitment to stand by the Palestinians, all they gain their rights, their national soul.

The king expressed satisfaction with the U.S. commitment to peace, based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, and on the principle of self-determination. He pointed out that Jordan has been exerting all possible efforts through its relations with the U.S. and

Netanyahu, bar accepting 13%

(Continued from page 1)

for the creation of a Palestinian state, which he said was a condition "in order for Israel to remain a Jewish state."

The king urged Israelis and Palestinians to conclude negotiations by May 1999.

"The current talks fail, if by the end of the peace process," Mr. Peres said. Netanyahu denied a report that he agreed to demands to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank.

The Israeli Radio report said that Israeli premier had been asked to carry out the demand, but he had not provided the answer more than a week.

"Several times reported, we meant to a 13% withdrawal," Mr. Netanyahu said, returning to his office. "I am not going to accept the right to exist by a demonstration of the 1948 creation of the state." "We have no intention of accepting its problems will be solved."

The Palestinians: Fifty Years Later

Conflict's real resolution is a political compromise

On March 25, 1998 Professor Hisham Sharabi delivered The Kareema Khoury Annual Distinguished Lecture at the Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies of Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Following is the third and final part of that lecture.

TODAY, AS Meron Benvenisti reminds us, the population in the area of mandatory Palestine is 8.2 million, of whom 4.8 million are Jews and 3.4 million are Palestinians; that is, despite massive Jewish emigration since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Palestinians are more than 40 per cent of the total population. Within the next 10 to 15 years, it is quite likely that the proportion of Palestinians to Jews will equal or even exceed the 50 per cent mark. The present confrontation between the two communities, alternating as it has been over the past decades between violence and the search for a political solution, will necessarily shift to different grounds, to demography and culture. Thus, if in the next decade or so the Palestinians manage to transcend their present difficulties and succeed in building an educated, healthy, prosperous, and cohesive society in Palestine intimately linked to the Palestinian diaspora, the present balance of power will be transformed by becoming irrelevant. This is why, for the Palestinians, the strategy and the means of struggle are bound to change, with violence receding to the background and the social and economic process becoming primary.

Because of its human and financial resources, the Palestinian American community could play a large part in the transformation of Palestinian society at home and abroad. But to qualify, it must first prove itself capable as a community of building an institutional framework that will assure viable, systematic coop-

eration among the various existing groups and organisations. This will require a break with the past and the creation of new ways of thinking and organising. If successful, the Palestinian American community will provide the catalyst that could bring together the larger Arab and Muslim communities in America and build a powerful, functioning Palestinian-Arab-Muslim coalition.

To be successful, this effort must not try to enforce total unity by creating yet another all-embracing Arab American organisation. The practical challenge facing Palestinian Americans in the transitional stage is to discard the rhetoric of unity and find the proper means to accommodate difference and plurality within their community. If the Palestinians in the United States can provide a workable democratic model for making collective decisions and engaging in sustained cooperative action, they may supply the needed integrative model for the Arabs and Muslims in America and elsewhere in the diaspora.

Undoubtedly, the emergence in the United States of a cohesive and cooperating Palestinian-Arab-Muslim community will usher in a new era for effective political action on a national scale. American citizens of Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim background organising in support of a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, would not only allow them to exercise their constitutional rights as Americans, but also to influence a dangerously biased American policy in the Middle East. Such a role would help restore a badly needed direction and balance to U.S. foreign policy.

In Jaffa, one of my favourite places as a small boy, was the city's ancient harbour. I visited the harbour when I went back in the fall of 1993. The fall is the loveliest season of the year in Jaffa, when the perfume of the orange blossoms fills the air and the silvery-blue sea is

calm, and the western breeze soft and caressing. But standing where I often stood so many years ago, I felt only the bitterness and anger all Palestinians feel when they go back to where they were born and where their grandparents were born and spent their lives before becoming refugees. As I stood there I could hear people speaking Russian, probably recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union. They were full citizens in my country, and I was there only on a limited Israeli tourist visa. I try to remind myself of what had sustained all Palestinian refugees over the long years of exile: this land is not a memory, it is not lost, it is out there where it can be seen and touched, a patrimony that can never be given up nor

reconstructed apartheid system?

Will it always deny the three million diaspora Palestinians the right to return and the right to self-determination?

How long will a 19th century colonial project of settlement and dispossession survive in a 21st century world?

What will Israel do when the strategic balance in the region shifts, as it is bound to do, and when the United States' engagement in the Middle East begins to abate, as it inevitably will?

Netanyahu cynically tells the world that he is ready to negotiate a full peace with the Palestinians, while at the same time he declares that united Jerusalem will forever be Israel's capi-

I try to remind myself of what had sustained all Palestinian refugees over the long years of exile: this land is not a memory, it is not lost, it is out there where it can be seen and touched, a patrimony that can never be given up nor taken away.

taken away.

Will the Palestinians be the Jews of the 21st century? Perhaps, but they will not be the Zionists of the 21st century, the oppressors of another people.

One wonders, how does Israel plan to deal with the Palestinians in the coming century?

Will it indefinitely keep the over one million Palestinian citizens in Israel (some 20 per cent of the population) unequal, second class citizens, deprived of basic civil and political rights?

Will it forever keep the two million Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza under subjects of a refurbished bantustan or under a

tal, that most of the West Bank and Gaza will always remain under Israeli rule, that the Jewish settlements will never be dismantled but will continue to increase and expand.

The Palestinians will have peace and reconciliation with Israel when Israel complies with the international consensus, and agrees to implement the U.N. resolutions on Palestine, abides by international law, and lives up to its own commitments.

The Jaffa notables, who in that first spring of refuge appealed to the United States to convince the Jewish authorities to allow them to go back to their homes, were fully expecting to return to Jaffa in time to irrigate their citrus

trees. Most of the tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees were equally certain that they would return to their homes with the end of hostilities.

This did not happen. No one was allowed to go back home.

My own grandfather, who had taken refuge in Beirut with the rest of my family, kept his suitcase packed and his house keys in his pocket as he waited for the day he would go back. He and my grandmother died without ever seeing Palestine again. Now, 50 years later, most Palestinian grandparents are dead, without ever seeing Palestine again.

But their grandchildren and great grandchildren have taken their place; they are now waiting and preparing for the day when they will go home. You hear them say: if the Jews could wait two thousand years to claim a land they never saw, the Palestinians can wait another five, 10, 20, 50 years, but they will return; and they will return not as thieves in the night but, as legal owners of a land they know and love and have never abandoned.

Does this mean that there can be no peaceful solution to the conflict? Does the only solution lie in the reversal of what happened over the last 50 years and the destruction of Israel?

No, the clock cannot be put back, the past cannot be redeemed, Israel's destruction cannot be the goal.

The conflict's real resolution cannot be a zero-sum outcome, but only a political compromise, the fair partition of the land of Palestine. The legitimate struggle of the Palestinians will seek such a solution because it is the only attainable one, a solution based on justice, international law, and the imperative need for mutual accommodation and survival.

Sharabi is a Professor of European Intellectual History and Omar Mukhtar Professor of Arab Culture at Georgetown University.

King declares new chapter in union-government ties

(Continued from page 1)

"We must learn from the suffering that we endured in the past five decades, and from the 1967 and 1973 wars, unprepared and ill-planned steps that the Arabs took without an accurate analysis of the circumstances," Petra quoted the King as saying during the meeting.

The King said that Jordan took part in those wars out of its national commitment and duty towards the nation, despite the fact that it was not informed of the plans for the 1973 war.

"We went to Madrid with Arab consensus, and provided the Palestinians with an umbrella that enabled them to take part in the conference," the King said, in reference to the 1991 peace conference.

King Hussein reiterated Jordan's commitment to "stand by the Palestinians until they gain their rights on their national soil."

The King expressed satisfaction with the U.S. commitment to peace, based on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338, and on the principle of land-for-peace.

He pointed out that Jordan has been exerting all possible efforts through its contacts with the U.S. and

other U.N. Security Council members for the termination of the crippling sanctions against Iraq, punished by the international community for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Petra reported that the King also told union leaders that Jordan supported all efforts to restore Arab solidarity and settle differences between Arab countries.

Union leaders said King Hussein's visit to their headquarters yesterday, the first ever, gave them a great deal of hope that an open and frank dialogue with the government will solve outstanding issues between the two sides, including a much-awaited draft law to govern the associations' activities and organisation.

The King, who was accompanied by HRH Crown Prince Hassan and Royal Court Chief Fayez Tarawneh, described the discussions as "very open and constructive."

"His Majesty gave us assurance that he will look into our requests," said Hosni Abu Ghaida, chairman of the council of presidents of the unions.

"We [represent] 13 associations, each of them with its problems and ideas that will be presented to His

Majesty very, very soon," Mr. Abu Ghaida, who is also the president of the 38,000-strong Jordan Engineers Association, told the Jordan Times.

A heated debate between the government and the professional associations was sparked by the government's intention to regulate their organisation and activities, by dropping the mandatory membership in the unions.

In his Speech from the Throne opening the current 13th Parliament late November, the King entrusted Dr. Majali with modernising and developing the professional associations.

Changes to the professional associations law were expected to make membership in the unions voluntary, separate public and private sector members, and appoint a government official to supervise the activities of each association. Union leaders have rejected such proposals as aimed to "depoliticise" the professional associations.

But "the prime minister was there [at the meeting with the King], and we were assured that no law will be drafted without being openly and thoroughly discussed with the asso-

ciations," Mr. Abu Ghaida told the Jordan Times.

Accepting an invitation by Mr. Abu Ghaida to meet with union leaders, King Hussein said on the occasion of celebrations for the 45th anniversary of the assumption of his constitutional powers, on May 3, that the government and the unions needed to reach "a consensus which will give us the opportunity to accomplish more and more for this country and the region."

The King's prompt acceptance of the unions' invitation was interpreted by many politicians as a signal to the government and the opposition to engage in a dialogue.

The opposition and the unions sought to negotiate with the government before the November elections, but the latter insisted on a dialogue involving all parties, including those against the boycott of the elections.

The council of union presidents was holding a meeting yesterday to identify a list of issues to be tackled during their talks with the King.

The King said he read about the meeting in the newspapers, and "decided to drop in."

regional development.

Hence cooperation was vital among Arab states and their neighbours.

The 21-member Arab League remains plagued by divisions since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

"The Arab region has supplied the world with abundant oil resources at a low cost, while the industrial countries have been the chief source of energy demand and consumption throughout this century," said Prince Hassan. "The growing interdependence between the two sides has been the subject of much and intense diplomacy particularly since the first oil crisis in 1973."

The Crown Prince said the main issue of concern was to define a role for the region to cope with "great political, economic, and technological changes and the increased need for energy."

Oil and diplomacy, he added, could play a key role in this transitional period. "It is obvious that the demand for oil will increase in the medium and long-term, particularly in the developing markets of Asia and Latin America," the Crown Prince noted.

Hence, the Arab region and Iran would have to supply

Prince Hassan urges Arabs to settle differences, work in harmony towards the future

(Continued from page 1)

increased quantities of oil to create a balance in world energy markets at realistic prices.

Simultaneously, Arab states would have to accelerate their efforts in developing and diversifying their natural and human resources and in using oil as a bridge to take them to the post-oil era.

"This era could be before us at the second half of the 21st century," Prince Hassan said.

Kamel Abu Jaber, president of the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, said that "Jordan believes oil should be more than a commercial commodity of trade... becoming a bridge to build mutual understanding and respect."

He said oil should not be a reason for future conflict. "Since the Gulf Crisis of 1991 and the emergence of the contours of a possible new international world order, there is a need to begin to think of oil as a medium of understanding," Dr. Abu Jaber added.

Ali Attiga, Secretary general of the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), said that while oil was often used as a political tool, it also played a main role in development.

In the mid-1970s and early 80s, a total of \$30 billion in oil revenue were

invested in the region on development.

"But when oil is not properly used, it can be divisive," he said. "I believe it can become a positive factor in Arab cooperation. Political differences have obstructed this natural development and they have to be cleared up," Dr. Attiga remarked.

Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, former Saudi Minister of petroleum and mineral resources, spoke about Arab oil and the region's diminishing political power.

He said the Arab region's present weakness was caused by the lack of democracy and income disparities.

"Unfortunately, the use of the oil weapon in 1973 intoxicated us and we have thereafter made a lot of mistakes which deprived us of the power we enjoyed in the past," Sheikh Yamani said.

"It's not only the inter-regional conflicts (that are causing this weakness), but also the internal situation in so many Arab countries such as the lack of democracy and financial problems," he added.

Former United States Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Richard Murphy said that oil was a

vital global commodity and a main physical resource of wealth in the Arab World.

"It was always very much on our minds in terms of pricing, production difficulties and situations of boycott and sanctions," he told the Jordan Times. However, he said he did not believe oil was the major source of conflict in the region.

Dr. Murphy said that some tension was created because some countries in the region had oil to fuel their economic development while others did not.

"Certainly in the early days, the past imperial powers — France and Britain — drew the map of the Middle East to maximise their influence over the production and control of oil."

On Tuesday, Dr. Murphy will present a paper on "The International Community and Sanctions" which will focus on the effect of technology on oil and its influence on the distribution of oil supplies.

A plenary on "Oil Culture: A New Perspective" is also on Tuesday's agenda. Topics to be debated include the impact of oil on Arab social and political culture and the environment.

The final session will look at "Oil and Diplomacy."

Netanyahu, back in Israel, denies accepting 13% troop withdrawal

(Continued from page 1)

called for the creation of a Palestinian state, which he said was a condition "in order for Israel to remain a Jewish state."

He urged Israelis and Palestinians to conclude their negotiations by May 1999.

"If the current talks fail, it will be the end of the peace process," Mr. Peres warned.

Meanwhile, Mr. Netanyahu denied a report Monday that he agreed to U.S. demands to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank.

The Israel Radio report said the Israeli premier had agreed during talks in Washington to carry out the withdrawal provided he would not be required to hand over more land later.

"Several things have been reported, such as my agreement to a 13 per cent withdrawal which is not true," Mr. Netanyahu told a news conference shortly after returning to Israel Monday.

Mr. Netanyahu also accused the PNA of denying the right of Israel to exist by calling last week's demonstrations against the 1948 creation of the Jewish state the nakbeh, or "catastrophe."

The demonstrations on Thursday "were against the very existence of Israel and they were inflamed by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)," Mr. Netanyahu said.

"This is something that has to stop. There has to be a real recognition of the existence of the state of Israel, the fact and its right to exist. Arab leaders

should have condemned this march," he said.

"This is the main stumbling block to peace. When the Palestinian leadership stand in front of the people and says... Israel is here to stay, that will do more to advance the breakthrough," he said.

An aide to PNA President Yasser Arafat said Monday that the Palestinians would not have accepted a conditional withdrawal.

"It's not the case," Martin Indyk, U.S. assistant secretary of state who has handled some of the U.S. mediation, said Monday in Washington. "There are still gaps to be closed."

"There is good deal of urgency to the situation," he added, noting several days of violence on the West Bank and in Gaza. "The situation could blow."

Israeli Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said Monday that some progress has been made in the U.S.-Israeli talks in Washington, but that the gaps have not been bridged.

"Positive work was done in some areas, but not to the extent that we can say we reached an agreement," Mr. Naveh told Israeli army radio. Mr. Naveh was not asked about Mr. Netanyahu's alleged new proposal. Israeli opposition legislator Yossi Beilin said Mr. Netanyahu's proposal, if indeed he made it, was not new. Israeli officials have said in the past they could either hand over land in small segments to meet the requirement for three pullbacks or do it in one chunk, but that the amount of land to be transferred would not vary.

Kuwaiti FM hands in resignation

(Continued from page 1)

process, which is fiercely opposed by Hamas. The Hamas leader's visit was probably "the last straw" for the disgruntled foreign minister, one diplomat said.

Another diplomat pointed to differences over oil policy and said the resignation was the result of a number of rows within the cabinet headed by Sheikh Saad.

"On its own, Sheikh Yassin's visit was not enough reason for the foreign minister to go. It's more likely that he is trying to secure his position within the family," she said.

The minister has also reportedly been in dispute with colleagues in government over reforms aimed at cutting the state

budget deficit, and he is said to have complained of "interference" in the running of foreign affairs.

Efforts are now underway to persuade Sheikh Sabah to withdraw his resignation, the newspapers said, quoting sources close to the ruling Al Sabah family.

Apart from in 1995 when he briefly left Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah's only break since 1963 from the post of foreign minister was between 1991 and 1992.

He has sat in for the prime minister during lengthy stays abroad by Sheikh Saad for medical treatment. But Sheikh Sabah is sidelined each time on the premier's return, analysts said.

Iranian factions start debate on new speaker of parliament

TEHRAN (AFP) —

The two main factions in the Iranian parliament have begun an intense debate over whom to pick as the assembly's new speaker as political conflict in the country deepens, parliamentary sources said Monday.

Majma-e-Hizbollah (Hizbollah Association), the moderate-leftist coalition close to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, is opposed to the current speaker, conservative champion Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nouri, although it does not yet have an alternative candidate.

Majma-e-Hizbollah met late Sunday to "try to reach an agreement" on a list of candidates to be nominated as speaker and board members of the Islamic Assembly.

About 100 deputies of the 270-member parliament were present at the meeting, which "discussed the country's current political situation," including the selection

of a new speaker.

The moderate newspaper Akhbar said Monday that the Association members failed to agree on a list of candidates.

MPs must elect both a speaker and board of directors for the parliament each year, and the next vote is to be held next week.

The conservatives currently hold the parliament's leadership and have a majority in the assembly, followed by the leftist-moderate coalition and "independents."

The right-wing wants to retain Mr. Nateq-Nouri as speaker. Last year the 54-year-old was elected unchallenged, receiving 211 votes from the 243 MPs present.

The speaker was the conservative faction's candidate in the presidential election last May, but he was defeated by a three to one margin.

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company raises capital to JD18m, distributes JD1.35m in dividends

THE GENERAL assembly of the Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Company has approved the recommendation of the board of directors to distribute JD1.35m in dividends, at a rate of 15 per cent, following a JD13.4 million gross profit registered by the company during 1997. The gross profit was 32 per cent higher than the JD10.2 million recorded in 1996.

Board Chairman Anis Muasher expected the company to post a "good" increase in profit this year. He told the shareholders that the firm is also studying the possibility of merging with some Jordanian drug-manufacturing companies.

Mr. Muasher told the general assembly that the restructuring that was implemented during the past two years was evident on the performance of the company during last year as sales grew by 23.4 per cent, from JD24.6 million in 1996 to JD30.4 million in 1997. Net pretax profit shot up by 85 per cent reaching JD7.04 million from JD3.80 million at the end of 1996.

This record figures of sales and profit have reflected positively on financial ratios such as the net profit to paid-up capital which climbed from 37 per cent in 1996 to 74 per cent in 1997. The rate of return on shareholders equity stood at 19.5 per cent (11.5 per cent in 1996), the chairman said.

He indicated that the firm is exerting all possible efforts to continue higher growth in outside markets through consolidating traditional markets and opening new ones. Mr. Muasher praised the Jordanian economic policy, its opening to the world and the government's signing of international economic accords which will help create new markets for the company in Europe and the United States.

The chairman highlighted the success of the company in repaying the JD460,243 overdrafts to local banks and indicated that the shareholders' equity at the end of 1997 has reached JD34.07 million, 17.5 per cent higher than the JD28.95 million at the end of 1996. Long-term liabilities also dropped by 61 per cent from JD1.2 million in 1996 to JD0.49 million in 1997. The ratio of net after-tax profit to sales rose from 13.5 per cent in 1996 to around 22 per cent in 1997.

The general assembly concluded its meeting by approving the recommendation of the board of directors to capitalise retained earnings and increase the company's capital from JD9 million to JD18 million. The capital increase will be achieved by awarding the shareholders a free bonus share against every share they hold (Al Ra'i + Al Dostour + Al Aswaq).



Participants in the Jordan-Turkey Business Council (right) listen to speakers (left) during the opening session Monday

Jordan urged to join Black Sea Council to enter new markets

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan-Turkey Business Council (JTBC) opened a two-day meeting in Amman Monday to explore further ways for boosting Jordanian-Turkish trade relations and help businessmen to launch joint ventures.

Addressing the opening session was Sharif Oglu who urged Jordan to join the Black Sea Cooperation Council as an observer in order to benefit from business and trade in the markets of that council which includes Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Albania in addition to Israel as an observer.

Mr. Oglu said that once Jordan joins this council it will guarantee entry of its national products to Turkey as well as the other council member states.

He added that the Turkish business community wishes to increase dealings with the Middle East markets noting that only in an atmosphere of peace can capital flow freely and business thrive.

He urged Jordan to increase the flights of Royal Jordanian to Turkey in a bid to facilitate Jordanian businessmen's deals with the Turkish private sector businesses.

Fakhri Bilbeisi, who is a member of the Jordanian Businessmen's Association, outlined the Jordanian private sector's role in the national economy noting that the government has been passing laws to promote bilateral trade exchanges.

Calling on Turkish investors to invest in Jordan, Mr. Bilbeisi noted that investors are welcome to carry out the Disi water project, which has an estimated cost of \$500 million, and a light railway which costs JD 160 million. Other projects include a thermal power station, an oil refinery in Aqaba as well as the industrial harbour in Aqaba at a cost of JD4 million.

Muntaser Oglah, director general of the Investment Promotion Corporation, outlined the incentives given to investors in Jordan stressing that numerous opportunities exist for stronger economic and trade links between the two countries.

The Turkish delegation, comprising 200 businessmen, will Tuesday open a trade fair at the International Motor Show displaying goods from 90 different firms.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7670	0.6167	1.4875	136.02	1.4488	1762.18	2.0139	6.9916
DE Mark	0.5596	-	0.3480	0.8323	78.15	0.8103	985.80	1.1288	3.3824
GB Sterling	1.6215	2.8996	-	2.4127	220.81	2.3492	2858.21	3.2685	9.7182
CH Franc	0.6723	120.06	0.4138	-	91.48	0.9733	1183.84	135.30	4.0252
JP Yen	0.0074	1.3131	0.4531	1.0932	-	1.0647	12.85	147.88	4.4032
CA Dollar	0.6902	1.2916	0.4225	1.0566	1.06	-	1270.80	1.4551	4.3265
IT Lira	0.0008	1.0140	0.3489	0.8844	1287.19	0.8219	-	11.43	3.3990
NL Guilder	0.4965	88.71	0.3081	73.86	67.50	0.7191	674.67	-	2.9739
FR Franc	0.1669	0.2982	0.1029	24.8198	22.88	0.2617	37.61	33.6100	-

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7670	0.6167	1.4875	136.02	1.4488	1762.18	2.0139	6.9916
Jordan Dinar	1.4194	-	0.3900	0.5517	0.1340	0.4317	5.1801	21.8427	4.8110
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0818	0.98	403.48	0.9095
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	0.9488	-	8.86	0.5119	9.74	4013.90	0.9480
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0841	1.01	415.71	0.9371
Kuwait Dinar	3.2673	2.3165	12.2545	1.2318	11.88	-	12.00	4944.13	0.9371
Emirate Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0208	0.9811	0.0833	-	412.01	0.9287
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4685	2.4786	0.2481	2.4055	0.2023	2.4271	-	2.2542
Egyptian	0.2932	0.2079	1.0996	0.1105	1.0671	0.0897	1.0767	443.62	-

Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7670	0.6167	1.4875	136.02	1.4488	1762.18	2.0139	6.9916
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.1890	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0818	0.98	403.48	0.9095
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0208	0.9811	0.0833	-	412.01	0.9287
KW Dinar	3.2673	2.3165	12.2545	1.2318	11.88	-	12.00	4944.13	0.9371
BH Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0841	1.01	415.71	0.9371
CY Pound	1.897	3.39	1.1897	2.8212	257.948	-	-	-	-

Period	-1	-3	-6	-1	-3	-6	-1	-3	-6
Cncy	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month	Month
USD	5.8941	6.7344	5.8125	5.8931	-	-	-	-	-
GBP	7.4375	7.4948	7.5000	7.5062	-	-	-	-	-
JPY	0.5729	0.6146	0.5963	0.5875	-	-	-	-	-
DEM	3.8937	3.7063	3.8186	4.0312	-	-	-	-	-
FRF	1.7083	1.7604	1.8438	2.0208	-	-	-	-	-
CHF	3.6313	3.6838	3.7188	3.9375	-	-	-	-	-
ITL	5.6120	5.1370	4.8370	-	-	-	-	-	-

Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cls
DOW JONES	9050.67	-45.33	-0.5	9128.89	9000.42	9096
S&P 500	1104.18	-6.55	-0.6	1112.44	1104.18	1108.73
FT-SE 100	5826.2	-61.6	-1.0	5917.4	5784.5	5917.8
Nikkei 225	16394.47	141.81	0.9	16405	16069.7	16243.2
CAC 40	3945.31	-44.92	-1.1	3976.57	3933.77	3980.23
DAX	6342.85	-50.29	-0.8	6398.96	6342.85	6383.14

Commodity	Last	Delivery	Buy	Sell
Coffee (ctbs)	129.92	Spot	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (ctbs)	2027	Spot	1.1477	1.1534
Sugar (ctbs)	268	Spot	0.3967	0.3987
Wheat (ctbs)	93	Spot	0.4761	0.4785
Soybean (ctbs)	28.25	Spot	0.1183	0.1189
Tee (ctbs)	115	Spot	0.8236	0.8282
Barley (ctbs)	0	Spot	0.3821	0.3839
Rice (ctbs)	410	Spot	0.4024	0.4044

New instalment of compensation to be distributed today to Jordanian returnees from Kuwait during Gulf crisis

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — More than 19,000 Jordanian returnees, who were forced to leave Kuwait during the 1990 Gulf crisis, will receive their

Tuesday as part of the U.N. scheme to compensate those affected by the crisis.

Yahya Al Oteibi, member of the Higher Committee to Compensate the Returnees (HCCR) said the total amount that would be distributed among the 19,544

returnees will amount to \$48.6 million, with each one receiving \$2,500.

Mr. Oteibi told the Jordan Times that the claims registered in the A category will benefit from this amount.

He indicated that the new instalment is the third for

claims included in category A and that more compensation is expected to be approved by the U.N. committee that supervises the distribution of these claims.

Mr. Oteibi added that the those who will receive compensation are "those who are

holding the rose notification" among the A category, which includes also red, yellow, blue and green notifications.

More than 400,000 Jordanians left Kuwait during and after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Jordanian government estimates that the total claims by its returnees will exceed several billions.

The claims by these returnees were classified into several categories which include category B for serious injuries and deaths, C for individual losses below \$100,000, D for losses above \$100,000, E for losses incurred by corporations working in Kuwait and F for foreign government's and organisations' claims.

B-category claims were distributed last year, while the instalment that will be given to the category A is the third in less than three years.

Mr. Oteibi said the distribution of the compensations will need several days to be accomplished.

Members of the HCCR were quoted by the local Arabic newspapers that the delay in distributing these amounts was due to "technical procedures" which included the auditing of the names and identities of those who claimed for compensations.

Mr. Oteibi said that among the reasons that led to the delay in distribution of funds was creating a "mechanism" that would ensure that all returnees receive their money.

Mr. Oteibi said that 1,700 claims for compensations that exceed \$100,000 have not been approved by a U.N. committee that supervises and approves the claims.

He added that these claims need to be supported by evidence and documents to prove their eligibility.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SOHISIM										
TELEPHONE: 62777 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 18/05/1998										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANSACTIONS	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
S 355,500	170,000	ARAB BANK	16.5	1.99	120	2940	593380	202.50	202.00	-0.50
S 2,340	1,620	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	14.2	4.30	32	9249	16174	1.76	1.75	-0.01
S 1,540	1,250	BANK OF JORDAN	4.2	0.00	4	819	1080	1.32	1.32	-
S 1,380	1,880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	62.4	0.00	5	5000	4720	0.96	0.96	-
S 2,680	1,600	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.3	8.70	3	1000	1620	1.60	1.60	-
S 6,510	3,210	THE HOUSING BK.	20.9	3.03	112	55684	184657	3.26	3.30	0.04
S 4,180	1,790	JOR. KUNAFAT BANK	9	0.00	9	525	1009	1.95	1.92	-0.03
S 520	590	JOR. GULF BANK	4.2	0.00	9	25150	17960	7.71	7.70	-0.01
S 4,020	1,740	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	19.5	0.00	49	49558	95769	1.89	1.91	0.02
S 1,400	1,800	BEIT-AL-HAL (BEITWA)	4.5	0.00	5	1700	1571	0.94	0.92	-0.02
S 4,460	2,500	ARAB BANKING CO.	26.2	0.00	6	21758	54395	2.50	2.50	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 277.28 CHNG: -0.03 354 173583 972334										
VS 1,350	1,850	ARABIAN SEAS INSUR.	45.0	0.00	4	11250	9174	0.85	0.82	-0.03
2,400	1,590	JOR FRENCH INSUR.	6.1	11.52	4	700	1522	2.20	2.17	-0.03
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 121.86 CHNG: -0.22 8 11950 10696										
S 2,240	1,620	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	10.0	5.34	9	8050	16561	2.05	2.06	0.01
S 7,500	2,750	VEHCLS. OWNERS FED.	11.5	4.29	1	100	2960	2.75	2.80	0.05
S 6,100	3,150	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	14.8	8.70	8	3250	15540	4.64	4.80	0.16
S 1,550	970	BATL. PORTFOLIO	43.1	0.00	22	6900	7550	1.11	1.08	-0.03
S 1,120	850	REAL ESTATE INV.	16.5	0.00	4	1325	1091	0.85	0.84	-0.01
S 590	330	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	9	0.00	13	7300	3285	0.43	0.45	0.02
S 9,500	6,700	ALRAI	8.3	7.33	4	250	1370	5.75	5.46	-0.29
S 1,480	1,050	KID. EAST HOTELS	8	0.00	2	5500	5940	1.07	1.08	0.01
S 4,600	2,100	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	10.7	2.85	21	25300	54381	2.10	2.15	0.05
S 1,090	900	ZARBA EDUCATION	16.3	0.00	2	2250	2093	0.93	0.93	-
S 1,830	1,450	UNIFIED CO.	6.7	7.24	5	1150	1781	1.51	1.52	0.01
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 115.82 CHNG: -0.93 81 61975 111520										
S 4,450	2,450	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	15.0	4.35	5	1380	3487	2.51	2.53	0.02
S 11,350	9,270	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.1	8.57	7	920	8531	10.39	10.37	-0.02
S 1,480	1,040	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	12.3	6.45	4	1150	1761	1.48	1.55	0.07
S 2,070	1,100	INDUSTRIAL CONG. AGR.	9	0.00	6	850	1044	1.23	1.22	-0.01
S 5,740	3,650	ARAB PHARM. MANUF.	15.1	3.66	35	8014	43802	5.46	5.47	0.01
S 7,040	1,760	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	7.7	5.65	9	5000	8891	1.85	1.77	-0.08
S 1,440	1,020	JOR. PIPES MANUF.	9.8	8.47	1	200	236	1.18	1.18	-
S 6,350	4,650	DAR ALDANA DV. INV.	6.8	6.24	2	1000	5610	5.60	5.61	0.01
S 760	370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	57	79400	35623	0.43	0.45	0.02
S 490	590	JOR. ROCCMOOD INDUS.	9	0.00	2	100	100	0.51	0.50	-0.01
S 2,020	1,260	UNIV. CHEM. INDUS.	12.8	6.43	9	1250	1568	1.26	1.25	-0.01
S 3,000	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFG.	27.2	0.00	6	2000	2250	1.14	1.13	-0.01
S 730	530	JOR. LUMPHO-CHEM	11.4	0.00	4	2600	1543	0.60	0.60	-
S 1,560	1,150	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.0	4.43	8	4400	6013	1.39	1.36	-0.03
S 1,050	570	KANCHER INVEST.	48.3	0.00	1	100	49	0.52	0.49	-0.03
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 103.42 CHNG: -0.05 250 195816 194955										
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 162.03 CHNG: -0.03 693 443324 1289505										
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 18/05/1998										
N 1,050	910	EXPORT & FIN. BKR. 75%	18.0	0.00	27	34900	24956	-97	-97	-
S 620	490	KACH. EXP. REIN. MOIN.	28.0	C.CC	2	1500	765	-51	-51	-
S 530	340	JOR. TRADE PAK.	9	C.CC	34	75350	35405	-46	-47	-0.1
S 680	700	AL-KHAWARIZMI CENTERS	8	C.CC	2	75	150	-50	-50	-
S 800	660	UNION INV. SOV.	9	C.CC	7	56000	15120	-77	-77	-
S 600	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	C.CC	12	19993	8384	-42	-42	-
S 1,010	720	AL-KHAWARIZMI INV. CO.	0	C.CC	1	850	1500	-50	-50	-
S 730	550	RAZI PHARM.	8	C.CC	5	2734	1964	-67	-67	-
S 430	240	INDS. CHEM.	9	C.CC	2	10000	2800	-28	-28	-
S 830	470	INDS. CERAMIC	13.1	C.CC	3	575	500	-75	-75	-
N 950	550	ADVANCED PHARMA. IND.	9	C.CC	10	20351	13727	-65	-65	-
N 710	430	NATL. POULTRY	9	C.CC	9	4650	2361	-54	-54	-
N 950	470	OPTICAL HEARING 75%	8	C.CC	6	4200	1680	-65	-65	-
GRAND TOTAL 206 478287 210914										

Sports

Jordan Times, Tuesday, May 19, 1998 11

Amman to host women's Arab Karate Championship

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom will host the 1st Arab Karate Championship for Women May 25-28 with five teams taking part.

Jordan Karate Federation (JKF) spokesman Maher Al Nimri told the Jordan Times that teams from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, in addition to Jordan would be taking part.

"It is considered an important event as several players will be named for the women national team," he added.

The event, the first of its kind to be hosted in Jordan, will see two teams representing the Kingdom with the Crown Hotel sponsoring one team.

Jordan's team consists of: Muna Ali Khawajah, Samah

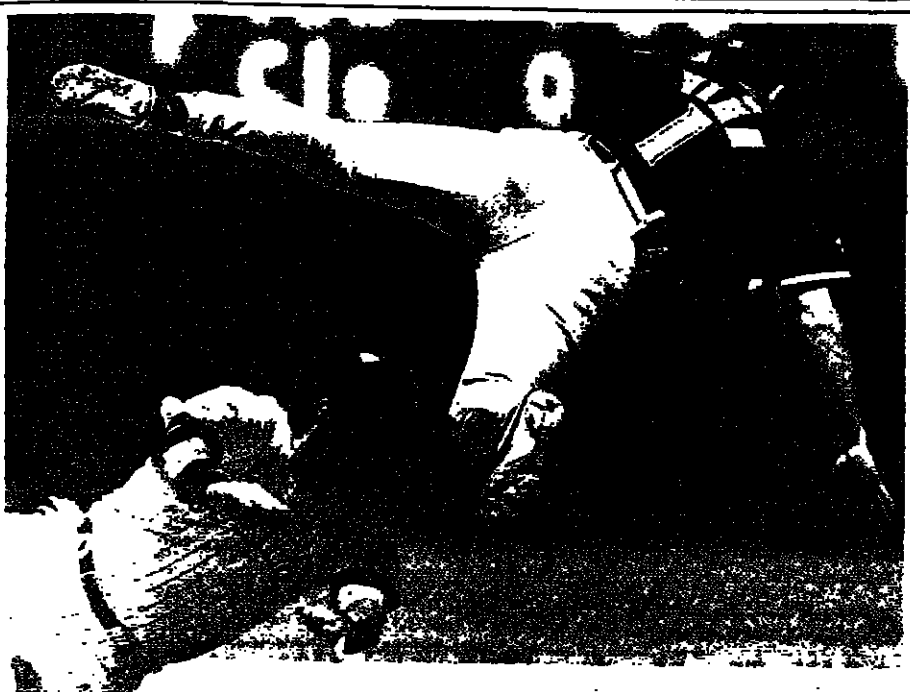
Abu Lail, Buthaina Al Muhaisri, Reem Al Rawashdeh, Reem Al Qudah and Shatha Fawzi. The coach is Ahmad Mutaweh.

Crown Hotel team consists of: Fadwa Ali Abed Hafez, Mariam Mohammed Harb, Nesreen Abu Karsh, Marina Mohammed Harb, Esraa' Al Khateeb and Sawzan Madanat. The coach is Abdullah Khaled.

Meanwhile, the men's karate national team returned from Egypt after taking part in President Hosni Mubarak Championship.

"Our team came in the third place after Egypt which conquered the first and second places," Nimri said.

Teams from ten countries took part in the event including Turkey, Sweden, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Egypt and Jordan.



Milwaukee Brewers second baseman Fernando Vina (1) tumbles over Colorado Rockies runner Vinny Castilla to complete a double play to end the fourth inning in Denver. Vina threw out Dante Bichette who hit into the double play (Reuters photo)

Costa wrist injury hands Rios title

ROME (AFP) — Chilean clay court master Marcelo Rios earned \$350,000 without lifting a racket here on Sunday as Spanish opponent Albert Costa retired with a wrist injury before the start of the final at the \$2.45 million Italian Open.

Rios remained the form player of 1998 as he picked up his fourth title of the year — Mercedes Super 9 trophy at Indian Wells, Key Biscayne and Rome as well as Auckland in early January.

The 22-year-old left-hander, ranked three in the world, also contested the Australian Open final, losing in three sets to Petr Korda.

Costa, ranked 20th in the world, fell hard on his right wrist after hitting a forehand on the first point of the final game during his 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 semi-final win on Saturday over compatriot Alberto Berasategui.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, dusted himself off and carried on for the victory. But during the night Costa said that the injury took a turn for the worse.

"At 9:30 or 10 at night I was feeling pain, very bad pain," said Costa, who won the German Open last week when fellow Spaniard Alex Corretja retired with exhaustion during their final.

Costa underwent treatment on Saturday afternoon and tried to hit shortly before the scheduled Sunday start of the Cente Court match.

"I tried to hit ball, but I had no power," said Costa, who will return to Barcelona for treatment of an injury which the tournament doctor said could require from four to 25 days to completely heal.

"There was no way I could play, no way," said a disappointed Costa. "If this had been the French Open final, it would have been the same."

Bulls battle back to claim Eastern Conference opener

CHICAGO (AFP) — Michael Jordan rebounded from one of his worst play-off halves ever on Sunday as Chicago rallied for an 85-79 win over Indiana in the first game of their National Basketball Association semi-final series.

Jordan scored 25 of his 31 points after the interval, perhaps justifying a report by NBC television that said he would receive his fifth career NBA Most Valuable Player award on Monday.

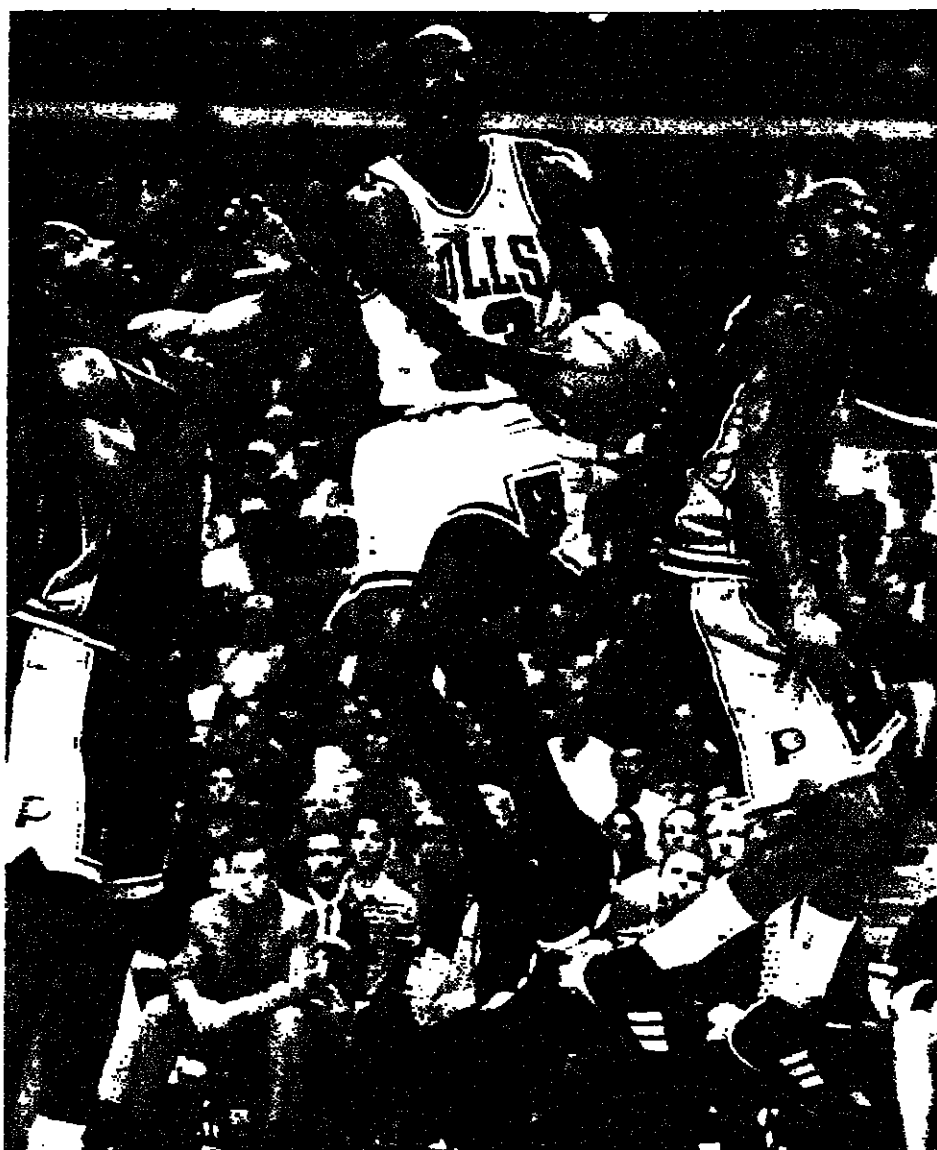
Jordan had made just one of his nine shots from the field in the first half. "I totally lost my rhythm and started missing easy shots," Jordan said. "It affected my whole thought process in terms of aggression and looking for the shot. The third quarter, I was able to turn that around and become more aggressive and just think about going to the basket more. It worked out."

Jordan shot 9-of-10 from the foul line and had five steals as he continued to climb the postseason ladders. His sixth foul shot made him the all-time postseason leader, passing Wilt Chamberlain, who took 1,627 playoff free throws. He also tied Magic Johnson for the most playoff steals with 358.

Jordan keyed a 10-0 run that opened the third quarter and gave the five-time champion Bulls the lead for good. He scored 10 points in the period and added 15 more in the final eight and a half minutes after Indiana cut a 14-point deficit to 66-65.

Dennis Rodman — benched and fined for arriving late to practice on Friday — scored nine of his 11 points in the opening half, becoming a surprising offensive option while Jordan struggled. He added 10 rebounds before fouling out with 3:32 remaining.

Ron Harper scored 15 points and Australian Luc Longley added 12 for the Bulls, who overcame another case of the first-game blues and played the final two-plus minutes without Rodman and Toni Kukoc. Game Two in the best of seven series is Tuesday at Chicago. Scottie Pippen



Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan goes up for a shot between Indiana Pacers' Dale Davis (L) and Jalen Rose (R) in the fourth quarter of the Eastern Conference finals in Chicago, May 17. Chicago won the game 85-79 and leads the series, 1-0. Jordan, who was held to six points in the first half, had a team-high 31 points for the game (Reuters photo)

scored just four points on 1-of-9 shooting but defended Indiana point guard Mark Jackson, using his height to take away Jackson's low-post game. Forced out of his natural game, Jackson committed seven of the Pacers' 26 turnovers.

"I knew I was going to sacrifice some of my offensive game when we decided I was going to cover Mark today," Pippen said. "I told MJ that he was going to have to take care of the bulk of the scoring because of my effort on Jackson."

"It symbolises that our defensive intensity is the most important part of our game," Jordan said. "When

we get the types of turnovers that we got tonight, it helps to ignite our offence. It also plants a seed in their mind that they have to be more careful with the ball and that affects their offensive game plan."

Reggie Miller scored 16 points and Antonio Davis added 12 and 11 rebounds for the Pacers, who are trying

to reach the NBA finals for the first time in franchise history. Indiana held Chicago below 36 percent (29-of-81) from the field, including 0-of-6 from three-point range, but failed to capitalise.

"They took a lot of things away from us that we wanted to do offensively," Pacers coach Larry Bird said.

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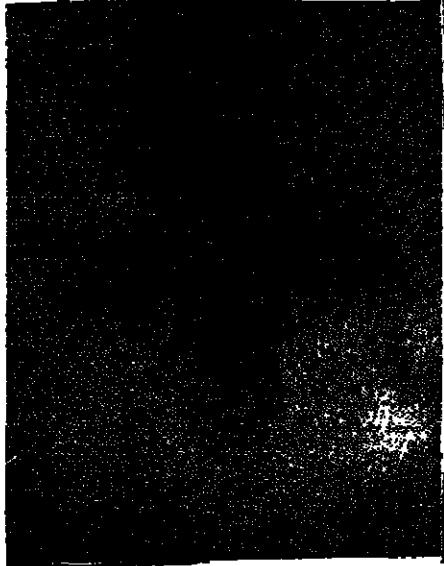
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Israel's social security:

Palestinian killed by Jew not considered victim of terrorism

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's social security said Monday it could not compensate the family of a Palestinian killed by a Jewish extremist as a victim of terrorism because the murder is not considered an "anti-Israeli" attack.

"The social security cannot pay compensation under this title (as a victim of terrorism) because the law only applies to acts of terrorism committed by groups at war with Israel," spokesman Haim Bitossi said.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman said Sunday that terrorism-victim compensation should be given to the family of Khairi Mussa Alqam, a 51-year-old Arab east Jerusalem

Palestinian who was stabbed to death in an ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhood last week.

Police have said Alqam was probably the victim of a Jewish

Family may be compensated - on basis of work accident

extremist suspected of injuring six other Arabs in stabbing attacks.

Under a 1970 law, a Jerusalem Palestinian slain by a Jewish extremist is not considered a victim of terrorism,

while a Jew killed by an Arab is.

Mr. Bitossi said social security "would do its best to compensate the family under laws for deaths in work accidents," since Alqam was on the way to work when he was slain.

Police are still searching for Alqam's killer, who is believed to live in the neighbourhood where the six stabbing occurred over the past three months.

The ultra-Orthodox Jewish council in Jerusalem made an unprecedented call to police to "use all means" to find the killer and promised to cooperate.

Swiss president calls on PNA to work on human rights record

BIR ZEIT (AFP) — Swiss President Flavio Cotti said Monday that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) had still not done enough to improve human rights in self-rule areas.

"We consider the human rights situation not yet satisfactory," Mr. Cotti said in a speech at Bir Zeit University outside the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"Some problems remain, such as detention without trial and arbitrary arrests and restrictions on freedom of the press," Mr. Cotti said.

"I encourage you to continue on your way to enhance democratic institutions. Human rights and rule of law are of paramount importance for the development of Palestinian society," he said.

Mr. Cotti, who met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Friday, also criticised Israel's construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and its moves to strengthen its hold on Arab east Jerusalem.

"We reject the acquisition of land by force. The expansion of Israeli sovereignty to east Jerusalem constitutes a unilateral act. Establishment of settlements in occupied territories constitutes a violation of the Geneva Convention," he said.

He called on both sides to "respect their commitments" under self-rule accords in order to break the 14-month deadlock in the peace process.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Cotti toured the Jalazun refugee camp outside Ramallah, visiting a U.N. school and clinic

and the home of a refugee, Nasser Sayed, to meet with residents.

He also visited a Rehabilitation project to help rehabilitate political prisoners who have been released from Israeli prisons.

But he was forced to cancel a planned visit to the West Bank town of Hebron for security reasons due to clashes between protesters and Israeli soldiers which continued for a fifth day on Monday, his spokesman said.

Mr. Cotti was in Israel on Sunday during which he visited to Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and spoke to Israeli officials about efforts to return assets taken from Jews by Nazis and put in Swiss banks during World War II.

Religious revolt in Knesset deprives Netanyahu of majority for 3 hours

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu narrowly averted the collapse of his governing coalition this weekend when an ultra-Orthodox party withdrew in protest at moves to draft religious students into the army. It was reported Monday.

The United Torah Judaism party, which accounts for four of the Netanyahu coalition's 61 seats in the 120-member parliament, submitted its resignation from government Sunday via Deputy Housing Minister Meir Porush, a leader of the group, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

In the resignation letter, the party's leadership, the Council of Torah Sages, said their decision would only be revoked if Mr. Netanyahu cancelled plans to form a government panel to study the possibility of drafting ultra-Orthodox youths into the

army, Haaretz said.

After three hours of trans-Atlantic haggling, Mr. Netanyahu, who was in New York, agreed that the commission would not be created without the approval of the Council of Torah Sages. His office announced the about face late Sunday night, but gave no reason for the decision.

Mr. Netanyahu had announced the formation of the panel last week in a bid to undermine support for draft legislation that would impose the draft on most ultra-Orthodox men.

The legislation, proposed by Labour Party leader Ehud Barak, would limit to 700 the number of deferments granted each year to students in religious seminaries.

Currently an average 2,800 young Israeli men gain

exemption from mandatory military service each year by declaring that their religious study is "a way of life."

Since the creation of Israel 50 years ago, ultra-Orthodox men have obtained exemptions from military service on the grounds that their lives are dedicated to religious study.

But as the size and political influence of the ultra-Orthodox community has grown, notably in Mr. Netanyahu's government, the routine exemption from military service has fuelled anger among Israel's secular majority.

Military service is mandatory for most Israeli 18-year-olds, with men serving three years and women 19 months. Men in addition must carry out one month of reserve army duty each year until the age of 49.

Gore: U.S. will never alter commitment to Israel's security

NEW YORK (AP) — Speaking to a national Orthodox Jewish group Sunday, Vice President Al Gore reaffirmed Washington's commitment to Israel's security.

"Whatever Israel decides cannot, will not, will never alter our fundamental commitment to Israel's security," he told 1,000 people attending the annual dinner of Agudath Israel of America, referring to Israel's decisions regarding Middle East peace process.

His comments came as the Clinton administration backed away from a threat to suspend its mediation of the Middle East peace talks following

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rejection of a U.S. proposal for territorial compromise.

"If you believe that any disagreement on this or that would or even could ever lead to a weakening of the bonds between the U.S. and Israel... think again," Mr. Gore said.

"Those bonds will always be firm."

Mr. Gore attended the group's annual dinner at the New York Hilton and Towers Hotel to receive a humanitarian award, given yearly by the organisation, for his role in defending the rights of Orthodox Jews in the United

States.

Although mourning the death of Rabbi Moshe Sherer, the group's president for 35 years, Agudath Israel decided to continue with the ceremony.

"Among the many concerns Rabbi Sherer was deeply committed to the security of Israel," Mr. Gore said. "The U.S. has an absolute, uncompromising commitment to Israel's security." The 77-year-old Sherer died Sunday after a long illness.

Agudath Israel of America, which is based in New York and promotes issues concerning Orthodox Jews, was celebrating its 76th annual dinner.

Iran: U.S. 'bowed' to EU pressure on Total

TEHRAN (AFP) — The United States bowed to European pressure in agreeing to waive sanctions against the French oil firm Total for signing a deal with Iran, the Islamic Republic News Agency said Monday.

"The U.S. finally bowed to pressure from the European Union Monday and waived sanctions threats against Total," it said, referring to the Iran-Libya sanctions act

which seeks to penalise non-U.S. firms which invest heavily in Iran's or Libya's oil or gas sectors.

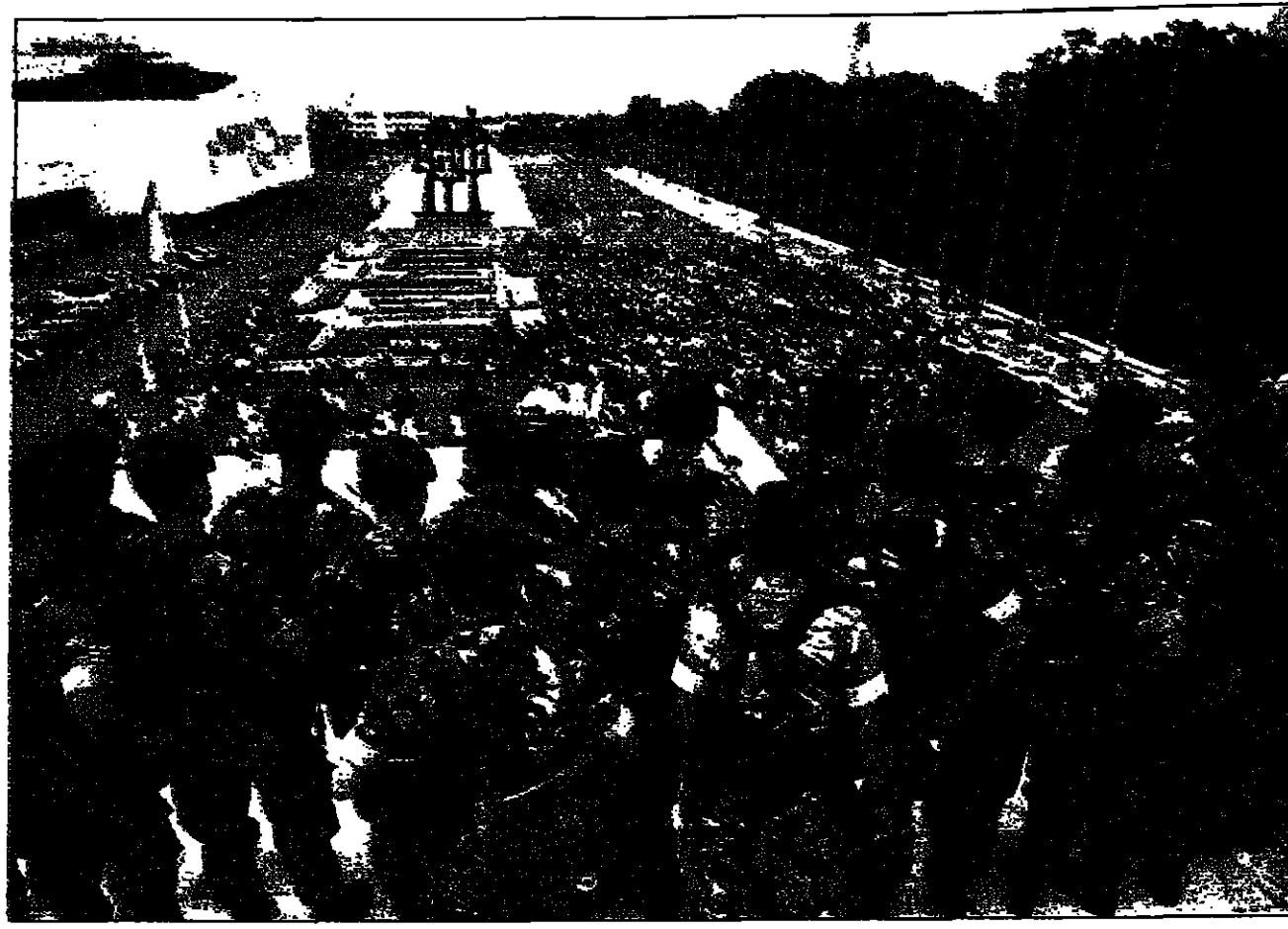
U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said in London on Monday that the U.S. government had exempted an international consortium headed by Total from the so-called d'Amato sanctions legislation.

Investment by the consortium in Iranian gas always

development fell under the effects of the d'Amato act applying sanctions against companies investing in Iran and Libya.

Ms. Albright said that she had decided that exemption of the three companies involved in the consortium was in the U.S. national interest.

The two other companies are Gazprom of Russia and Petronas of Malaysia.



Indonesian soldiers watch students outside the parliament building in Jakarta Monday (Reuters photo)

Military refuses to back deputies' demands for Suharto resignation

JAKARTA (AP) — The Indonesian military refused Monday to back parliamentary leaders' calls for Indonesian President Suharto to quit, and instead supported the embattled autocrat's plan to reshuffle his Cabinet.

Earlier Monday, Indonesian Speaker of Parliament Harmoko said leaders of the various political factions would meet Tuesday and ask the 76-year-old leader to step down.

However, Gen. Wiranto, who commands the country's all-important military, said the demand only represented the views of individuals.

"Based on the constitution, the statement has no legal

basis," Gen. Wiranto told a crowded news conference at the military's headquarters in central Jakarta.

The general said any change in power must be done "constitutionally," a process that could take months or longer.

He said any demand on Mr. Suharto to quit must be made by the whole parliament in a formal session.

Gen. Wiranto said the most important task at hand would be for the president to go ahead with a promised Cabinet reshuffle and carry out reforms to overcome the worst economic crisis in 30 years to hit Indonesia.

He suggested that a "reform council" be set up to work with Parliament.

He said the council should be made up of government members as well as students, critics and other sections of society.

Gen. Wiranto also issued a stern warning against any further unrest, like the wave of rioting that ripped Jakarta and other cities last week. That rioting claimed more than 500 lives.

He especially warned against a plan by students to stage a mass anti-Suharto rally Wednesday, the anniversary of Indonesia's nationalist movement.

"There are still people suffering because of the rioting and looting," Gen. Wiranto said.

Organisers have predicted that as many as 1 million

protesters would hit the streets of the capital and other cities.

At a news conference earlier in the day, Mr. Harmoko said leaders of the factions in Parliament would meet Tuesday to ask for the resignation of Mr. Suharto.

Lt. Gen. Moetojib, the chief of state intelligence, met with Mr. Suharto Monday afternoon and said later the president looked calm.

In response to Mr. Harmoko's call for the president to resign, Lt. Gen. Moetojib quoted Mr. Suharto as saying: "I will answer this myself tomorrow." It was not clear how or in what form Mr. Suharto would respond.

Iraq says Security Council's nuclear offer not enough

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq said Monday the U.N. Security Council's offer to declare the country free of nuclear weapons was not enough and failed to address Baghdad's calls for a lifting of economic sanctions.

"The Security Council's decision does not match up to the minimum of Iraq's demands, nor its huge sacrifices" in disarmament, the Iraqi cabinet said, quoted in official newspapers.

The cabinet, in a meeting chaired by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, dismissed the move as "insufficient" and said "Iraq is still waiting for the Security Council to lift the embargo," in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Security Council last Thursday said its offer on nuclear weapons depended on Iraq providing answers to all outstanding questions from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The 15-member Council is set to discuss closing the nuclear file in July at the earliest.

Despite the progress, a crippling oil embargo can be lifted only after Iraq fully complies with U.N. requirements that all its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as long-range missiles be dismantled.

Gulf sends signal to Washington with Sheikh Yassin's welcome

DUBAI (AFP) — Gulf states sent a signal to Washington, sponsor of the deadlocked Middle East peace process, by giving Hamas leader Sheikh Ahmad Yassin a warm welcome in the region, analysts and diplomats said Monday.

The welcome for Sheikh Yassin, whose movement is a sworn enemy of Israel and the peace process, was also meant to reassure local public opinion of the Gulf Arab monarchies' support for the Palestinians, they said.

The spiritual guide and founder of Hamas, who was released in October after eight years in Israeli jail, is in Yemen winding up a visit to the Arabian peninsula that kicked off in Saudi Arabia in March.

"Gulf leaders want to warn Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that they could take a tougher line," and tone down their support for the peace process, said Abdullah Hameidi, a political analyst in Qatar.

They are also sending a message to the United States "to stop its unconditional support for Israel."

"It's a gesture of defiance towards the American sponsors of the peace process," which has been in deadlock for more than a year, a Western diplomat in Doha said.

Mr. Hameidi said the oil-rich

Gulf Arab states also sought to bring Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat closer to Hamas and persuade him to stop making concessions to Israel.

During the tour by Sheikh Yassin, both the Saudi and Yemeni leaderships called for the Palestinians to close ranks.

Hassan Madani, a political analyst based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE), said that "Gulf leaders want the PLO leader [Arafat] to take a firmer stand in negotiations with Israel."

The warmth of the public reception for Sheikh Yassin was also a sign of disenchantment in the Gulf over "Arab policies in the peace process," he said.

Abdullah Shajji, who teaches political science at Kuwait University, called the visit "a sign of [the emirate's] independence" from the United States, which liberated it from Iraqi occupation in the Gulf war of 1991.

Kuwait wanted to show other Gulf leaders that it is not fully aligned with the United States and would "support the Palestinians if the peace process fails," Mr. Shajji said.

An Arab diplomat in Riyadh said Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, wanted "to show its support for the Palestinian people, whatever

their choice, even if it is armed struggle."

In the Saudi kingdom, the semi-paralysed Hamas leader underwent medical treatment and made the pilgrimage to Islam's holiest sites in Mecca. Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz visited Sheikh Yassin in hospital.

Qatar's emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, called on him in a Doha hotel, in a departure from protocol.

Local television showed footage of the emir kissing Sheikh Yassin on the forehead in a sign of respect. The next day, Qatari imams who lead prayers in mosques called for the faithful to support Hamas.

Sheikh Yassin also met top officials in Iran.

UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan had a long encounter with the leader of Hamas in front of TV cameras.

And last week, the Hamas founder was the first Palestinian leader to visit Kuwait since the Gulf war when the Palestinians were accused of siding with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

His stay in the emirate is reported to have contributed to Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah's decision to hand in his resignation because he was opposed to the visit.

Egypt bans sale of Viagra pending tests

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt has banned the sale of the male impotency pill Viagra until its side-effects are fully tested, although the country's top religious leader has given it the thumbs-up, health officials said Monday.

Financial sources said meanwhile that the share price of the U.S. drug company Pfizer which produces Viagra rose on the Cairo stock exchange amid reports that the Egyptian health ministry would soon authorise its sale in Egypt.

"We delayed issuing the license legalising the sale of Viagra until further tests are conducted to study its side-effects," Jamila Mussa, Egyptian health ministry

under-secretary for pharmaceutical affairs, told Agence France Presse.

The decision was taken by a ministerial commission in charge of approving and registering medicine in Egypt, she said.

Health ministry inspectors also embarked on Sunday on nationwide crackdown against drug stores selling Viagra under the counter, Mussa said.

The government daily Al Akhbar reported Monday that more than 270 Viagra pills had been seized in Cairo in the crackdown.

According to Egyptian and Arab press reports a single blue pill of black-market Viagra costs \$17.50 in Egypt and the

miracle drug is being smuggled to Saudi Arabia and fetching more than \$50.

The economic daily Al Alam Al Yom on Monday quoted financial sources as saying that Pfizer-Egypt shares rose by an average of five per cent daily between Apr. 30 and May 14.

Egypt's multi Sheikh Nassir Fawzi Wasseel, whose rulings on Islamic precepts are considered law, told the Arabic daily Al Hayat on Friday that "the use of medications against sexual impotency is not illicit."

But Islam only approves the use of potency-boosting drugs "if it is proved it ends impotency" and if it "improves the role of a man in legal procreation," Sheikh Wasseel said.

Blair gets his

first game of golf with Clinton

LONDON (AFP) — British Prime Minister Tony Blair and U.S. President Bill Clinton took time out Monday from their round of summits to play a few holes of golf. For Blair it was the first time he has ever swung a club and fortunately for him there were no official photographers or cameramen to record the event. They only managed to fit in a few holes before heading for London for an EU-U.S. summit. Asked how Blair had played, his spokesman said: "By all accounts, he was brilliant... at least that's what Bill Clinton said."

Jackson almost

gets head of state treatment in Namibia

WINDHOEK (AFP) — U.S. pop idol Michael Jackson swept into Namibia to a tumultuous welcome that took police by surprise and forced the cancellation of plans to visit a shopping mall and a street market. The Air Namibia commercial plane which brought Jackson from Frankfurt overnight was stormed by around 1,000 screaming fans, who broke through police security, already stretched by the demands of a southern African economic summit here. Finance Minister Nangola Mumba was knocked off his feet and trampled during the stampede while Prime Minister Hage Geingob was forced to board the plane to welcome the pop icon, who was treated almost as a head of state.

Lennon was a hypocrite

LONDON (AFP) — Julian Lennon, elder son of late singing star John Lennon, has accused his father of hypocrisy. "From my point of view, I felt he was a hypocrite," Lennon said in an interview with the Daily Telegraph. "Dad could talk of peace and love out loud to the world, but he could never show it to the people who supposedly meant the most to him: his wife and son." John Lennon abandoned his wife Cynthia and son Julian, then age five, for artist Yoko Ono, with whom he had another son, Sean. Julian has recently inherited part of his father's fortune, but the paper said Sean had got the bulk of it, estimated at \$370 million.

Sinatra's secret daughter hopes to be recognised in will

SYDNEY (AFP) — Frank Sinatra's secret daughter spoke for the first time of her grieving for the father she never knew. Deana Moore, who lives in Sydney, was born 40 years ago in London after a brief affair between her mother, Hungarian actress Eva Bartok and Sinatra, the Sydney Daily Telegraph reported. She said she hoped the singer would do what he never did in life — tell the world in his will that he recognised her as his child. "How could it have hurt him at the end to be a gentleman?" the paper quoted her as saying.

'Godzilla' takes Manhattan by storm

NEW YORK (AFP) — Some 13,000 people are expected to attend the world premier here Monday of "Godzilla," the latest movie based on the Japanese saga of the fire-breathing lizard. This time Godzilla, latest incarnation of the original big lizard in the 1956 Japanese movie, is more dangerous than ever, having become radioactive as a result of exposure to French nuclear testing in the Pacific. The film will have the biggest launch of any movie in the United States with 7,000 cinemas preparing to show it from Wednesday.

No Jordanians hurt in Indo-

MANIAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Interior said Jordanian citizens were safe and well following the riots that broke out in the Indonesian city of Medan on Monday. The department spokesperson Ibrahim Dar said that Jordanians living in the Indonesian city had been in touch with Royal Jordanian consular officials wishing to leave the city, adding that some citizens have been seen in the city.

Volume 23 Number 6843

King to meet branches of

MAN (U.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein will meet with the members of the Jordanian legislative and judicial branches today at the Jordanian Palace, according to a Cabinet announcement made Monday. The announcement was made by Acting Minister of Justice Nasser Lawzi one day after the King met with the heads of union presidents, which relations between the professional associations and the government have been strained since the last meeting. The King's meeting with union presidents, which was also reported by the media, followed the release of the 13 unions, the Jordanian release of the Court of Cassation.

Socialists put into Palestine

Combined agency dispatches. The Socialist Party in Oslo on Tuesday led to "bring the peace process to a halt." The Socialist Party also urged the government to "desist from practices, particularly those of collective punishment, which undermine the confidence, and to the settlement policies establishing a de facto state of the occupied territories." The Socialist Party also expressed its "strong support" for the peace process, which it said is "the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace." The Socialist Party also expressed its "strong support" for the peace process, which it said is "the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace." The Socialist Party also expressed its "strong support" for the peace process, which it said is "the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace."

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